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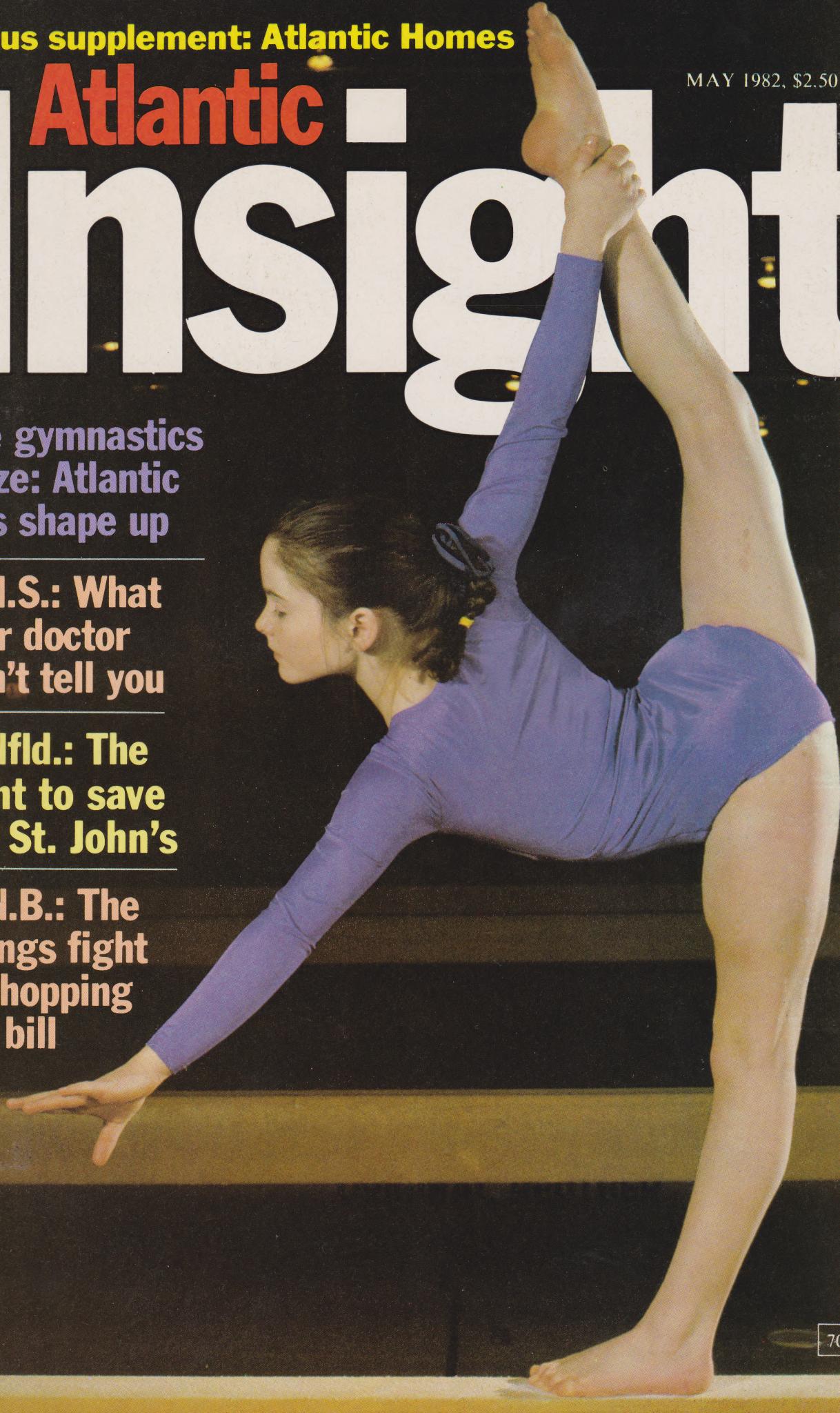
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The gymnastics craze: Atlantic kids shape up

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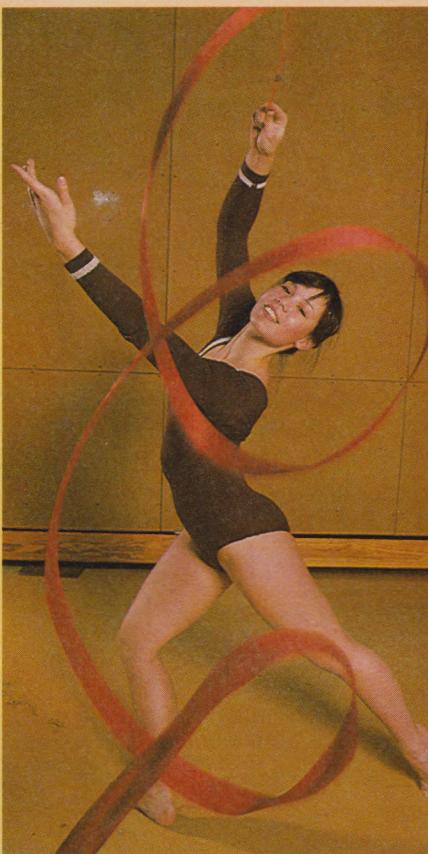
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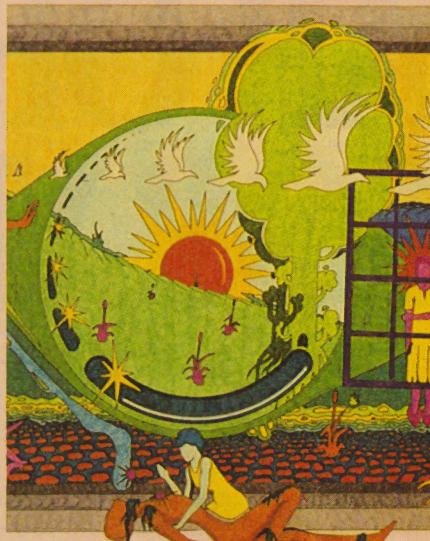
May 1982, Vol. 4 No. 5



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Cover Story: Why are thousands of kids across the region spending anywhere from three to 20 hours a week of their free time whirling through cartwheels and flying from high beams to parallel bars? They're part of the craze for gymnastics, which looks ready to take off as the hockey of the Eighties. The National Gymnastics Championships which take place in Halifax this month should fuel greater fascination with a sport that "combines the grace of dance, the daring of acrobatics, the strength and stamina of team sports." And best of all, as one young gymnast says, "it never gets to be like homework." By Roma Senn

COVER PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID NICHOLS



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Art: When the mood strikes him, Lionel Senecal will often sit at his drawing table 48 hours at a stretch, marathon sessions he describes as "killers." Out of them come strangely vivid, violent illustrations that aren't every art collector's cup of tea but that are the unmistakable mark of a distinctive talent. Born in Halifax, Senecal has been a waiter and a steeple-jack. "I'd like to try to be an artist," he says



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Travel: In the world of adventure travel, the country that's coming on strong is Australia. And no wonder. From skiing and surfing to hunting and fishing, from boating to ballooning, from kangaroo watching to crocodile sighting, with mountain hikes and camel safaris thrown in, the land down under has a lot to offer the visitor and you can have it as rough and ready or as comfortable as you please. Marilyn MacDonald sampled it both ways and concluded that Australia has all you really need

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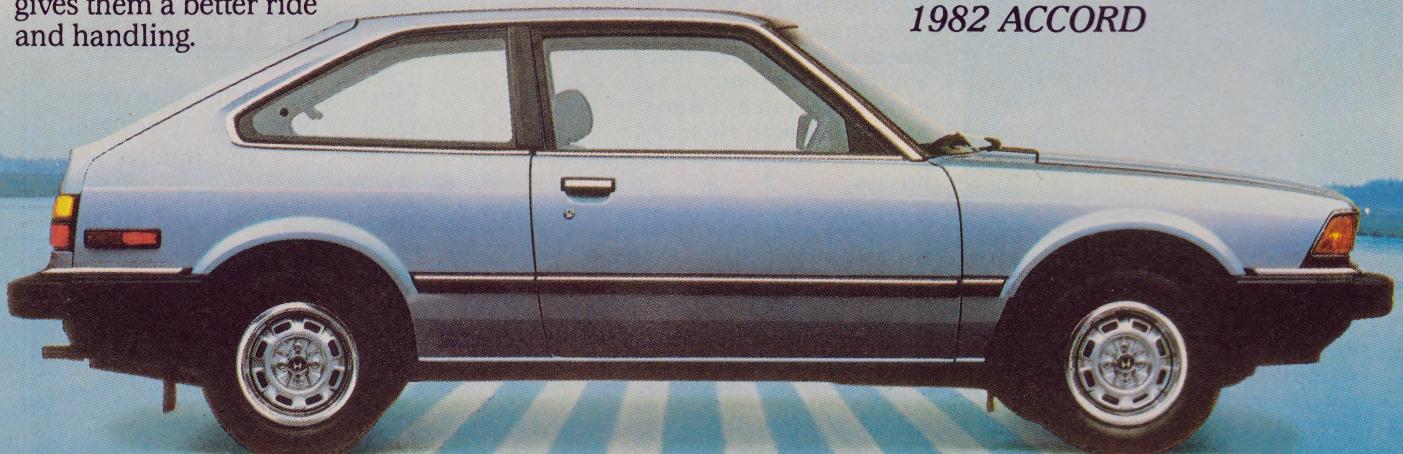
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Editor's Letter

Atlantic Canadians have always had a special relationship with the sea. In a very real sense, it's our glory, the stuff of which tourist brochures are made, the inspiration of our artists and photographers, our novelists and poets. It's what we want to come back to, over and over again, however far we may have wandered from it. Ask even contented expatriate easterners (and lots of them are contented) if there's one tiny thing they'd change about the place they now call home and, if it's a location not within easy reach of water—and not just any water, ocean water—the answer is predictable.

So we love the sea. Its sounds and rhythms have soothed many of us since childhood. But mixed with love is respect and fear because we know that the sea can be a fierce, implacable enemy. And that, too, is part of its glory.

It would be difficult, maybe impossible, for anyone who hasn't shared this special relationship with the sea to understand how the emotions of this entire east coast community could be caught up for days in the aftermath of a disaster such as the sinking of the oil rig Ocean Ranger off Newfoundland last winter. Whether it's an oil rig, a fishing vessel, a ferry or container ship, whatever its registry, wherever its crews call home, any marine disaster which occurs off these shores has some quality in it of a death in the family.

I flew home last February from a rainy Vancouver to a snow-clotted Halifax, scant hours before the news broke of the Ocean Ranger tragedy. For the next week it dominated the press, the conversations you had with friends and the talk you heard on the street. In spite of the hundreds of marine disasters that have occurred throughout the history of these provinces, each new one never fails to grip our imagination, emphasizing the cruelties in our environment and our endless, sometimes losing battle against them.

If you make your living from the sea, whether you work on an oil rig or a scallop dragger, you accept the risks your way of life involves, but not in a foolhardy way. You take precautions, calculating the strength of the opponent. One of those precautions against disaster, a vital one, is the Atlantic region's search and rescue operation examined by Alan Story in this issue (The Region, page 10).

Story's facts are frightening. When the officer in charge of the Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Halifax says that "with the equipment we have, the men on the Ocean Ranger and the *Mekhanik Tarasov* [a Russian container ship which also sank off Newfoundland in February] really didn't have a chance from the beginning," it is a chastening reminder that, in a region which has depended on primary resources for a livelihood, we



have too often miscalculated the strength of the opponent and put the people who work in such industries at unnecessary risk.

Marine disasters aren't the only ones that have claimed lives. Our people have died, or been disabled, in forests, in coal mines, in steel plants. If the potential for death at sea is most on our minds at present it is partly because of the recent examples of the *Ocean Ranger* and the *Mekhanik Tarasov* and partly because new discoveries have added to the list of fishing vessel crews and ocean-going ships' personnel a whole new set of workers at risk, those involved in the exploration for offshore oil and gas.

If disasters at sea are part of our legend, so are the stories of daring, heroic rescues. But, as Alan Story points out, "it takes more than courage to run a search and rescue system."

To put it plainly, according to Story's report, we have neither the quantity nor quality of equipment in the Atlantic search and rescue operation to do an adequate job of protecting a huge, geographically complex stretch of land and sea.

Most incidents which require search and rescue assistance need the use of aircraft. "What aircraft are available for search and rescue missions?" Story asks. "At Summerside, three 14-year-old Buffalo aircraft that carry enough fuel for five hours of flying and three 19-year-old mid-size Voyageur helicopters that have a range of 200 miles. At Gander, three similar helicopters with a similar range."

If you're out of the short reach of search and rescue equipment—as the *Ocean Ranger* was when it sent out its call for help—or if trouble strikes in an off-duty time, at night or on weekends, your peril is even greater. Mounting search and rescue efforts with such equipment, under the typical weather conditions which prevail off the Atlantic coast is, according to one source Story quotes, "like picking blueberries in the dark." But these are people, not blueberries, and that's just not good enough.

Marilyn MacDonald

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FEEDBACK

Art lovers speak out

I want to assure you that there are readers of *Atlantic Insight* who were in no way offended by the reproduction of Alex Colville's "Refrigerator" in your December issue ("The Most Important Realist Painter of the Western World," Cover Story). If you did not hear from us when the article came out, it was only because we saw "Refrigerator" for what it was—a reproduction of a work of art—liked or disliked it as such, read the article on Colville with more or less interest, and went on to other things. If *Atlantic Insight*'s prudish readers, inflated with the sense of their own piety, cannot see a nude work of art as anything but pornography, then it is they who have dirty minds.

Mrs. Marjorie Gann
Sackville, N.B.

For crying out loud, refund the subscriptions of those poor souls who were upset by Alex Colville's "Refrigerator." Especially those who thought it pornographic. We should only feel great pity for those who regard the naked body as "obscene" and are thus impelled to tear pages from a magazine so that others in their home will not be subjected to this imagined "horror." Alex Colville's work, we can be sure, will be honored long after all the page-tearers have been forgotten. Bet on it.

Dawson Winchester
St. Thomas, Ont.

I would like to congratulate you for devoting a whole editorial in defence of Alex Colville's painting "Refrigerator" (Editor's Letter, February). Possibly, most of the people who lashed out at *Insight*'s audacity in publishing "pornography" can only be forgiven due to their unbelievable immaturity and total ignorance of art. Everyone who works in some capacity in the visual arts has come to expect disparaging remarks on the nude human figure in art, by people who unfortunately have "pornographic" minds—wherein their secret fantasies are so contaminated as to transform the finest Michelangelo nude into a threat to people's morals.

Robert Percival,
Curator, Head of Art
New Brunswick Museum
Saint John, N.B.

The comments on Alex Colville's painting "Refrigerator" remind me of the outburst over the first general circulation of T. Eaton's mail order catalogue. Sermons were even preached on that iniquity. And no one has even mentioned those three beautiful cats, coaxing to be fed. Speak up, you other animal lovers. They were beauties, were they not?

E. L. Eaton
Windsor, N.S.

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Thea MacNeill as Anne of Green Gables

FEEDBACK

Your editorial comments in the February issue have prompted me to share this incident with you. When I read the article on Alex Colville, I admired his paintings. The nude painting did make me think, "They'll hear about this one, unfortunately." Then I did an unplanned thing. I handed the magazine to my nine-year-old son and said, "What does that picture mean to you?" He studied it for a minute and replied, "They don't have much to eat in their fridge, do they?"

Linda Walsh
Scoudouc, N.B.

I was dismayed to read the letters in your February issue from people who were so disgusted with the picture "Refrigerator" and the fact that you printed it. The human body is nothing to be ashamed of and perhaps if more people could create a picture that shows the human form in such a comfortable, unassuming way, there would be no need for the feelings of guilt that seem to be associated with nudity.

Karen Smereka
Guelph, Ont.

I'm writing in response to the "controversy" sparked by Colville's "Refrigerator." When I was home at Christmas, I waited until no one was looking and cut the picture out of my parents' copy of *Atlantic Insight*. Furtively (oh the hometown guilt and shame) I stuffed it in a suitcase with such hot items as a typewriter and an iron, and brought it back to B.C. Ever since, it has graced the fridge door in my East Van. flat. Friends—native Vancouverites and exiled Maritimers alike—love it. Thanks.

Ms. C. Bruneau
Vancouver, B.C.

Thank you for making Alex Colville known to me. Too bad that some people only see the surface of a painting but that is their bad luck. *Atlantic Insight* is a very good magazine and an asset to my Canadian culture.

R. Bruyère
Quebec City, Que.

Point Lepreau: Not the whole story

I am very disappointed with your February cover story on Point Lepreau generating station (*Lepreau: Splitting the Atom—and New Brunswick*). It seems very odd that the only people Mr. Everett was able to find to discuss the project were unnamed pipefitters and members of the Maritime Energy Coalition. I should have thought that a little extra effort on his part would have produced welders who are now able to produce work at nuclear standards—a process so closely scrutinized that your staff would be quite frustrated if similar standards applied to them. If Mr. Everett read his local paper he would have discovered that CANDU reactors have

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*Jennifer Griffiths, P. Eng.
Fredericton, N.B.*

I was concerned about your February cover story on Point Lepreau. The achievements of Canadian nuclear power in this country are feats that all Canadians can, if they wish to, be proud of. In 1981, for example, according to figures contained in the international newsletter *Nucleonics Week*, Ontario Hydro reactors took the top six places in performance among 130 large commercial reactors in the world. The Canadian reactors that established this impressive record have been going some years and the station at Lepreau incorporates the experience gained in their operation, together with other fruits of a fast-moving technology. Let us hope that, when Lepreau goes on line, later this year, it will prove an outstanding new example of Canadian nuclear technology and the construction and operating skills of the people of New Brunswick.

*Leonard Bertin
Toronto, Ont.*

Your article on Lepreau showed that there are more construction defects at Point Lepreau than people are generally aware of. An additional problem told to me by a former head of quality control at Point Lepreau is incorrect placement of electrical cables in cable trays associated with one of the emergency shutdown systems. The author of your article should have received more accurate information in order to balance the exaggeration inherent in Janice Brown's statement that, in a worst-case accident, "we could lose Saint John." Any immediate death in Saint John (24 miles from Lepreau) would be unlikely, except those due to panic. Death closer to the plant is certainly likely without effective emergency plans. The chief large-scale hazardous exposure would be to radioactive iodine which can lead to thyroid cancer. Hazardous exposure can be received up to 100 miles or more away from the plant. Effective prevention of the absorption of radioactive iodine is possible with the administration of potassium iodate pills to the public within this hazardous range. So far, plans for this have not been formulated. This is one of the reasons the plant should not be licensed.

*Peter M. Wade
Maritime Energy Coalition
Saint John, N.B.*

I'm writing to give my opinion on the Point Lepreau nuclear power plant. I'm only 10, but I think that I should count too. I do not think it should be built. Why? Because it is going to cost millions or even more to build it. Yet on TV they have advertisements to help starving people and donate money. Sure it's going to give more jobs but not very



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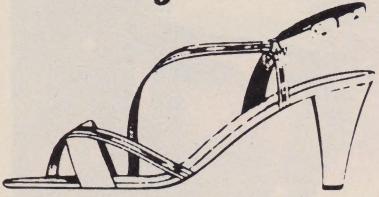
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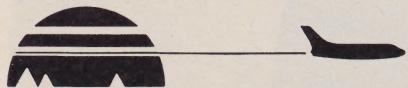
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FEEDBACK

many people are trained for that kind of work. Also think of all the lives that would be taken if there were a leak in the plant. The nuclear power plant is also going to take up a lot of room. Also it isn't going to look very nice.

Nicole MacLennan
Mabou, N.S.

Caught in the middle

I thank Mr. Flemming for an article (*Tenants Outnumber Landlords. Shouldn't They Have More Rights?* February) that looks at both sides—tenant and landlord. But in the middle, between these two sides, is the landlord who lives in the same house as his tenant. By law we are not allowed to discriminate against prospective tenants; in other words we can't choose the people who will live in our house. Rent controls prevent us from asking for our apartment what it is worth, even when there is a lineup to have the apartment at a higher rent. When the assessment on our house is raised, we pay the increased taxes. When the price of oil goes up, we pay for it. When the furnace goes in the middle of November, we not only pay for the new furnace but pick up the motel bills for the tenant while the repairs are being done. We are responsible because it is our house. I always thought that with responsibility came benefits. Where are they? Once upon a time, governments enacted laws to protect minorities that were discriminated against. Now they enact laws that will protect the majority so that they will be returned to power.

Sally E. Austin
Amherst, N.S.

Edmonton, the St. John's of the West?

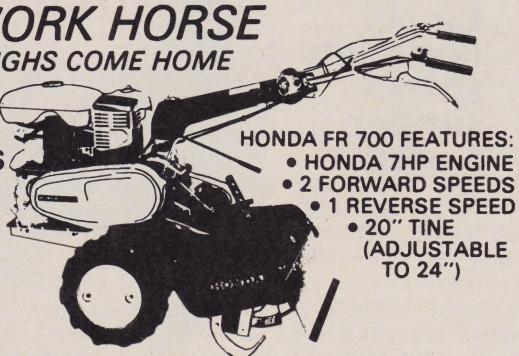
What do you mean, "Halifax will become the Calgary of the East, while St. John's will become only the Edmonton"? (*St. John's vs. Halifax: Who'll Boss the Boom?* January). I'm tired of Edmonton being portrayed as Calgary's ugly little sister. Population-wise, Edmonton is Canada's fourth largest urban area. Socially, Edmonton's population is more stable than Calgary's. People come to Edmonton to live as well as work. Culturally, Edmonton conquers Calgary on every indicator: Number of theatre companies, opera, symphony, dance companies, institutes of higher learning...the list goes on. Economically, Edmonton, as the oil industry service centre, has a brighter long-range future than Calgary. True, Calgary is where the decisions are made on where to spend money, but most of that money is spent in Edmonton's market area. Small business is booming in Edmonton, and it is small, not big, business that has the most opportunity for growth and job creation. The residents of St. John's should not be disappointed with being compared to only Edmonton. The comparison is a desirable one.

Darren Schemmer
Edmonton, Alta.

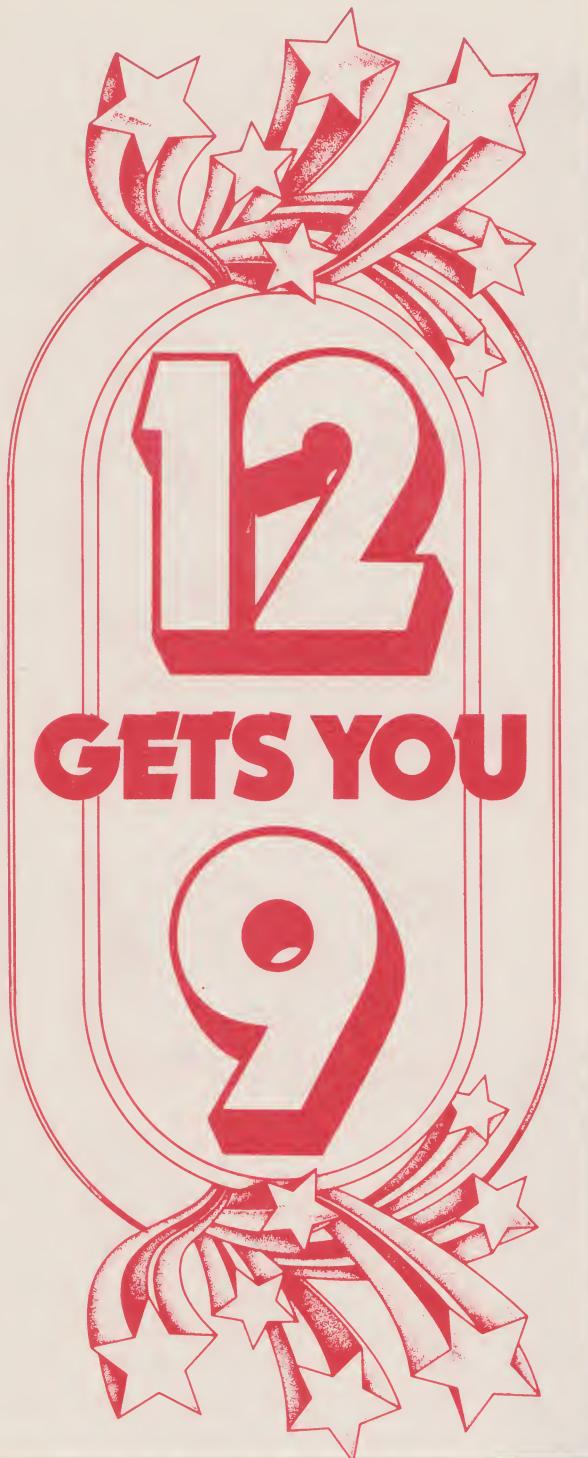
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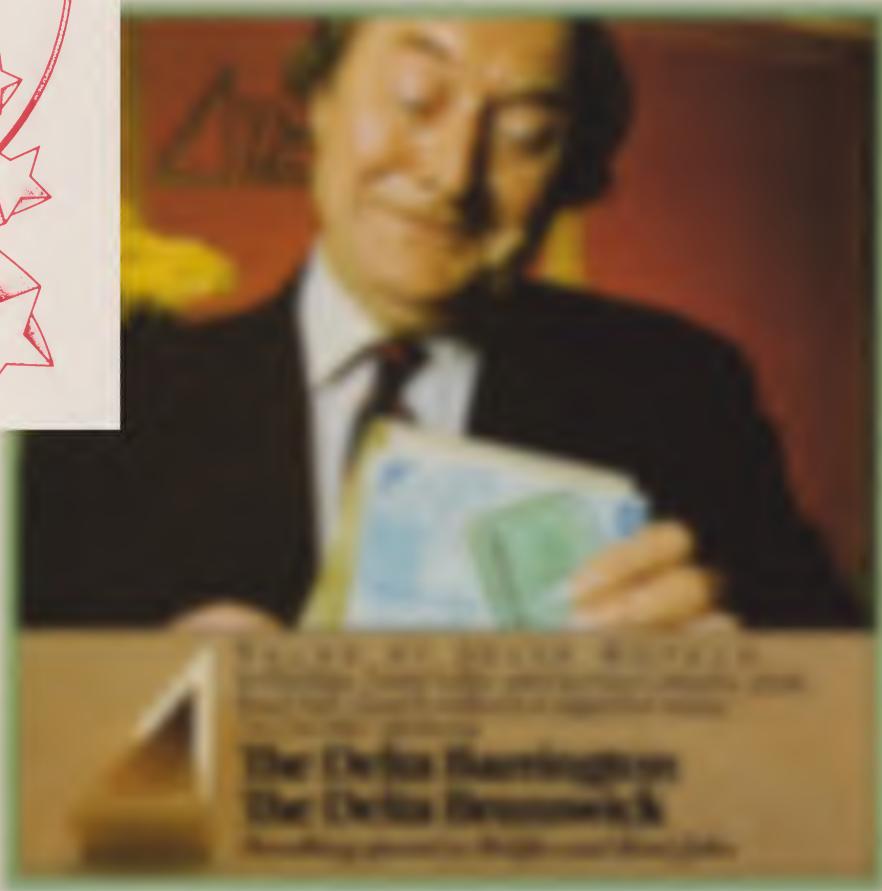


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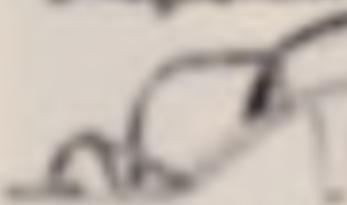
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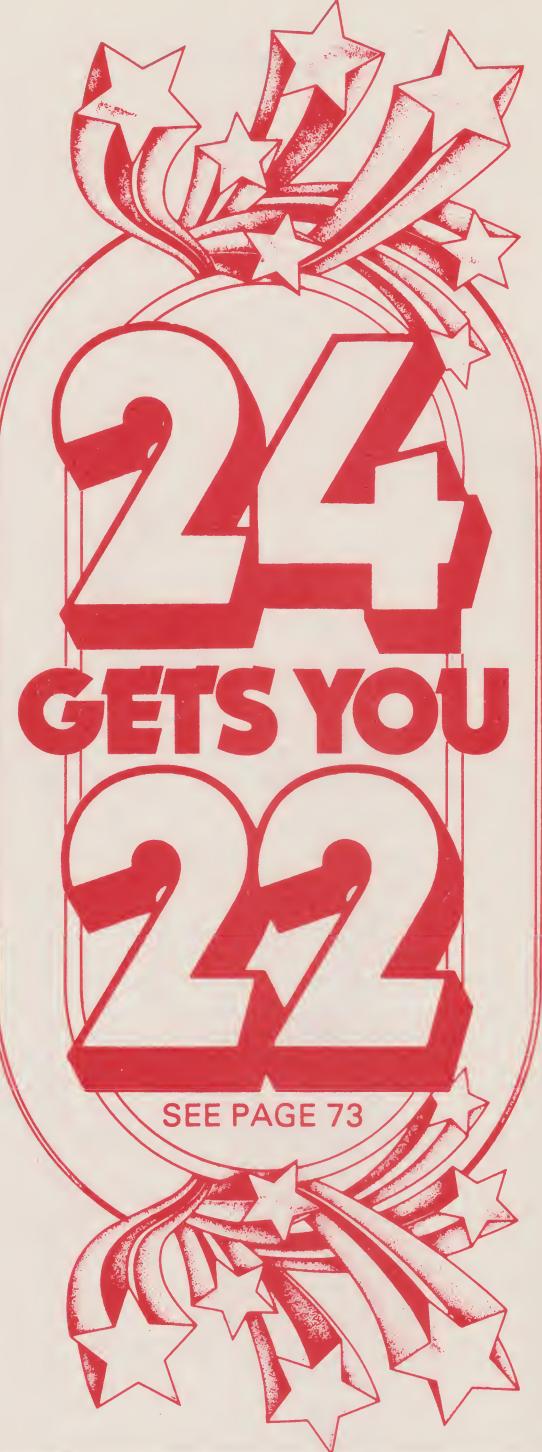
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Drug daze

Re your article *Do Old People Take Too Many Drugs?* (Region, February), I was glad to see the coverage that you gave the subject. Many of us who work in senior citizens' homes feel that we dish out too many pills to our residents. I know that when someone asks me for a pill for a pain, very often this could be cured by sitting down and spending time with that person. Unfortunately, in so many homes the shortage of staff and consequent lack of time make this impossible. I am sceptical of the value of the one day a week drug holiday. Many drugs take longer than that to be eliminated from an elderly person's system. A four or five day holiday would present a more accurate picture. Director of nursing Gates was fortunate that the doctor at her home shared her views. Too often a nurse's suggestion for reduced, or a review of, medication is met with stony opposition.

Jennifer A. Huff
Spruce Grove, Alta.

Gut feeling

Your article in February on fur farming in P.E.I. tore at my gut (*Fox Fur Is In—and So Is Fox Farming on the Island*, P.E.I.). Between the clubbing of young seals on the ice off Newfoundland and now this—the electrocution of young foxes—one wonders what happened to the magnificent creative talents of east coasters if they must continue to resort to the mass killing of creatures to make a living. "...and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them," reads Genesis 2: 19. Some stewardship!

W.A. Douglas Jackson
Edmonds, Wash.
U.S.A.

No point in prosecuting

After reading Alan Story's article on the closure of the Yava Mine (*The Mine is Ended, but the Malady Lingers On*, Nova Scotia, February) a number of my friends concluded that I couldn't quite muster the energy to prosecute this company. Mr. Story probably did not intend this. I explained to him that an injunction to keep the mine open and a prosecution for closing it are, as is obvious, mutually exclusive. As the cost of maintaining the mine for six weeks was many times greater than the penalty for premature closure an injunction, not a prosecution, was the only way to require substantial compliance with the Mineral Resources Act. A conviction could have only followed the flooding of the mine, the Department of Mines and Energy would not have been able to map and assess the remaining resources, the Department of Development would have been deprived of the opportunity to search for new operators and all for the sake of \$1,000 fine against a bankrupt company (try and collect that). In short, the taxpayers did better than they might have.

Douglas J. Keefe
Halifax, N.S.

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THE REGION

Search and rescue, Atlantic style: "Picking blueberries in the dark"

The region's rescue crews look after a vast zone with some of the harshest stretches of land and sea in the world. Some critics contend they simply aren't equipped to do the job properly

By Alan Story

On a stormy April night in 1970, it took search and rescue aircraft six hours to take off after first word came at 8:50 p.m. that the fishing vessel *Enterprise* was sinking in the Cabot Strait. Within hours, eight fishermen drowned, as did four seamen from the CN ferry *Patrick Morris*, which sank during an unsuccessful rescue attempt. During an inquiry into the tragedy, Judge P. Lloyd Soper found that the Atlantic region's search and rescue (SAR) crews were off duty at nights and on weekends; during those times, they took two hours instead of the usual 30 minutes to react to distress calls. "Disasters," Judge Soper reminded SAR officials wryly, "are not scheduled to fit into normal working hours."

Today, it's still not a good idea to get into trouble along the Atlantic coastline at nights or on weekends. Because of a manpower shortage, it takes the air rescue crew at CFB Summerside, P.E.I., two hours to get into the air after normal working hours (7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.). The region's search and rescue system still has too few vessels and aircraft. Much of the SAR equipment is out of date and not based in the most critical locations. Despite numerous marine accidents and subsequent investigations in the past decade, the search and rescue system operates much as it did when the *Enterprise* went down.

SAR officials have made some improvements, especially in Newfoundland, which in the past few years finally acquired three helicopters, two vessels and an emergency centre in St. John's. Across the region, a few more staff and a few more radio receivers have been added. And through the years, SAR crews have pulled off many courageous rescues: Last November's headline-grabbing heroics of the *Euro Princess* rescue mission off Sable Island are a case in point.

But it takes more than courage to run a search and rescue system.

At the Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RCC) in Halifax in mid-February, there's a lull in the search for survivors and bodies from two marine disasters—the sinking of the oil rig *Ocean Ranger* and of the Russian container ship *Mekhanik Tarasov*. Major Colin Gillis, the RCC officer in charge, stands before a huge, yellowing map covering an entire wall of the antiquated operations room. With a pointer, he traces the boundaries of the zone his crews are responsible for: "We start on the Bay of Fundy at the Maine-New Brunswick border, go almost straight north to Baffin Island—that's at 70 degrees latitude—and then down the middle of Davis Strait past Greenland to just about a midway point in the Atlantic. Then we cover to within 200 miles of the Azores off Africa, go to 120 miles south of Newfoundland, down to Georges Bank on the U.S. border and back into land.

"That's 1.2 million square miles of sea and .6 million square miles of land and it's all co-ordinated out of Halifax."

Gillis takes down his pointer. "With the equipment we have, the men on the *Ocean Ranger* and the *Mekhanik Tarasov* really didn't have a chance from the beginning."

This vast rescue zone equals an area more than half the size of Canada's total land mass. It includes some of the harshest stretches of sea and land in the world. As the beer commercial says, "You don't fool with nature here." At any one time, RCC may be responsible for the lives of more than 100,000 seamen sailing in its zone; there are 38,000 Atlantic Canadian fishing boats alone. In 1981, RCC logged 2,430 incidents requiring assistance. Most needed the



Gillis: A 1.8-million-square-mile zone
use of aircraft.

What aircraft are available for search and rescue missions? At Summerside, three, 14-year-old Buffalo aircraft that carry enough fuel for five hours of flying and three, 19-year-old mid-size Voyageur helicopters that have a range of 200 miles. At Gander, three similar helicopters with a similar range.

Not surprisingly, marine accidents often occur beyond the "range of action." When the initial lone, lumbering Buffalo from Summerside began the *Ocean Ranger* mission, it first had to refuel at St. John's. "It just didn't have the legs," says 413 Squadron commanding officer Denny Hopping. When the *Mekhanik Tarasov* sank hours later, its location was beyond reach of the Gander-based helicopters. And what would happen and who's responsible if a ship gets into trouble midway up the Labrador coast? A former Coast Guard officer points upward and says, "He looks after that."

Pilots say the 20-year-old helicopters are woefully inadequate. Unlike the modern Sea King helicopters used by the British Coast Guard, the six Canadian SAR choppers on the east coast are equipped with neither radar nor marine

telephones. "Newfoundland is a foggy place. Rescuing fishermen with one of those helicopters is like picking blueberries in the dark," says Earle McCurdy, secretary-treasurer of the Newfoundland Fishermen, Food and Allied Workers' Union. He recalls a rescue mission last year off northern Newfoundland



The Buffalo aircraft have a five-hour flying range

MYERS'S



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THE REGION

when a SAR helicopter hovered above a grounded fishing boat, but couldn't communicate with the fishermen below because the helicopter lacked a marine telephone. "Search and rescue equipment is grossly inadequate," McCurdy says.

So is the number of aircraft. If two disasters occur simultaneously, RCC and the two bases soon run out of aircraft. At 1 a.m. on Feb. 16, 1982, when the Ocean Ranger rescue was in full swing—meaning a couple of Buffalos and a couple of helicopters were in action—a weary Halifax controller was asked if he could send any other aircraft besides one Buffalo to

save the *Mekhanik Tarasov* seamen.

"I don't have any more," he replied.

By contrast, when the oil rig Alexander Kielland collapsed far out in the North Sea in March, 1980, 42 ships and 28 helicopters took part in the rescue. Circling directly overhead, the operations centre of an RAF Nimrod aircraft coordinated the entire rescue effort. In Halifax, RCC duty controllers are often hundreds of miles from the rescue scene and seldom have direct communication links with rescue aircraft or vessels.

One day this March, all the rescue aircraft in Summerside were out of service

at the same time; another day, all the helicopters were out. In February, 1972, a fishing vessel named the *Gulf Gull* ran aground off Louisbourg, N.S., because its radar and navigation aids were on the blink, and an inexperienced mate was in the wheelhouse. Six fishermen drowned as the vessel lay on its side for hours in the pounding waves just off shore. That day, none of the three SAR helicopters stationed in Summerside was in service.

When rescue crews have to rely on helicopters from one far corner of the region, the results can be disastrous. In October, 1976, the Dutch freighter *Gabriella* sent out a distress call that it was listing and taking on water just off St. John's harbor. By the time a rescue helicopter arrived from Summerside five hours later, 12 crewmen were dead of exposure.

For more than a decade, Newfoundlanders have been demanding that fixed-wing rescue aircraft be based in their province. But, as Major Gillis points out, any helicopter or airplane—no matter how modern or how strategically located—has its limits in high seas or stormy weather. "Really," Gillis says, "the best response to a sinking vessel is another vessel."

The Canadian Coast Guard operates four offshore SAR vessels in the region, the *Daring* and *Alert* in the Maritimes and the *Grenfell* and the *Jackman* in Newfoundland waters. (The two Newfoundland vessels were added only in the past three years. Before that, there were none.) Spotted along the coasts are Coast Guard stations equipped with 44-foot lifeboats. Though they are next to useless in storms or ice conditions, the Maritimes have nine such boats, Newfoundland two. In an emergency, other Coast Guard vessels, such as icebreakers and buoy-tenders, and smaller Fisheries boats may be used. The SAR can also call in commercial vessels—"ships of opportunity"—that happen to be near a vessel in distress.

Some Coast Guard officials are reluctant to publicly criticize current operations or question the size of the fleet. "We could use one more vessel in the Maritimes," says Capt. Donald Williams of Coast Guard SAR in Halifax, "but how can you justify more than that?" Other officers disagree. "I remember a couple of years ago when the *Daring* was in refit," one says. "I was serving on the *Alert* at the time. We steamed down to Georges Bank on a trip and then we got an emergency call to go way up in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It was more than 24 hours before we got there." Another points out the limitations of using "ships of opportunity" for rescue missions. While seamen on such vessels often make valiant rescues, he says (and some, such as the men on the *Patrick Morris*, lose their lives in the effort), these ships aren't outfitted for rescue work, the

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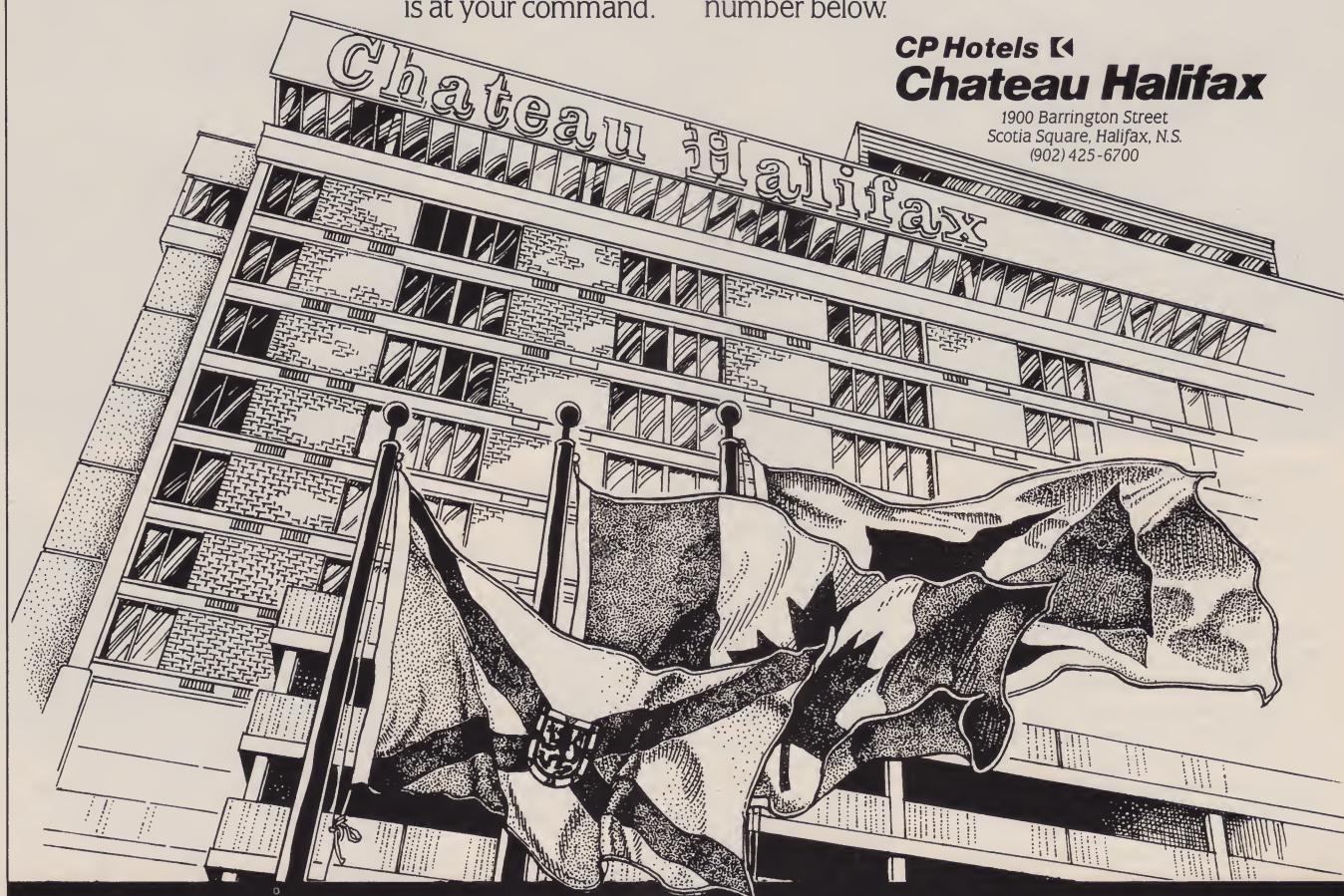
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THE REGION

crews aren't properly trained, and it's sometimes difficult to co-ordinate their rescue efforts. Another says the Coast Guard's capacity in Newfoundland is better than 10 years ago, but is still "insufficient."

All three compare the number of Canadian Coast Guard vessels off the east coast to the number serving under the U.S. Coast Guard off New England. Along the short coastline from Boston to the New Brunswick border, the U.S. Coast Guard operates nine SAR stations, each about 30 miles apart. A typical station has a crew of 25 to 30 and three or four smaller boats. Fifteen offshore cutters also patrol these waters. The U.S. Coast Guard performs other duties besides search and rescue, but that particular coastline stretches about 300 miles. The often treacherous mainland and island coastline of Atlantic Canada totals 14,790 miles.

Unlike the United States, Canada doesn't have a single agency responsible for all aspects of search and rescue, marine communications and accident prevention. Instead, these functions are divided among several departments: The Department of National Defence coordinates rescue missions through the RCCs and by operating the SAR aircraft. The Canadian Coast Guard provides communication facilities and rescue vessels and assists in rescue co-ordination. Another section of Transport Canada and the Coast Guard takes care of accident prevention, enforcement of statutes and investigation. Fisheries and Oceans helps develop SAR policy and provides back-up vessels.

"The SAR program is still mainly a collection of activities, the direction and level of which is determined by the departments concerned," concluded a recent confidential evaluation by the Committee of Deputy Ministers on Foreign and Defence Policy. "Neither SAR operational forces nor RCCs have a clear or common concept of where responsibilities for SAR begin or end." Since 1976, federal ministers have directed that marine accident prevention be given priority, but the committee found that only 200 of 1,000 reported marine groundings, collision and sinkings were investigated. In the past five years, primary SAR Coast Guard vessels spent 86% of their total sailing hours responding to non-distress marine incidents, such as delivering fuel or providing a tow. None of these is supposed to be the job of search and rescue. Why are existing SAR airplanes and helicopters outmoded and in short supply? Within the Department of National Defence, the committee says, "there is stiff competition with other defence needs." Faced with the choice of purchasing a fleet of new F-18 fighter aircraft or simply installing radar and marine telephones in 20-year-old SAR helicopters, it's obvious what had

the priority. It wasn't the lives of mariners.

In the waters of the Atlantic coast, ships and oil rigs are regularly colliding, grounding, foundering, capsizing, burning or simply going missing. To work at sea is to work in danger. How can we make our seas safer?

"Accident prevention is part of the answer," Major Gillis says. "Eighty percent of the incidents are preventable. Too often, someone didn't get enough fuel for a voyage; their pumps weren't checked out; a vessel was operating beyond its capacity; a radio wasn't work-

ing." Another part of the answer, some SAR critics say, is the creation of a single, specialized, non-military agency in charge of all facets of safety at sea. Obviously, that agency would need many more trained personnel and modern rescue equipment and facilities.

It also would need a change in attitude toward the lives of those who work at sea. Imagine phoning your local fire department tonight to report a fire and being told: "Sorry, we won't have a driver or crew for the fire-truck for two hours—it's outside normal working hours."



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NEW BRUNSWICK

Irving fights a multimillion-dollar tax bill

Revenue Canada and Irving Oil are arguing in the courts over profits of \$142 million made by Irving's Bermuda subsidiary

The question sounds like something out of a high school math book, but the answer may be worth a fortune to the federal government. It goes like this:

A tanker loads crude oil in the Middle East. Corporation X pays for the oil. The tanker sails for a refinery in Canada, owned by Corporation Y. While the tanker is at sea, X sells the oil at wholesale to Corporation Z, a Bermuda subsidiary of Y. Z marks up the price. The tanker arrives in Canada and Y pays Z for the oil. Now, when Y files its income tax return, does it report Z's profit on the deal as (a) an expense or (b) income?

It's a \$142-million question when X stands for U.S.-based Standard Oil of California (SOCAL); Y, for Irving Oil Ltd., based in Saint John, N.B., where it has a refinery; and Z, for Irving California Oil Co. Ltd. (IRVCAL) of Bermuda, a subsidiary of Irving Oil. Between 1971 and 1975, SOCAL sold crude to IRVCAL, which resold it to Irving Oil to realize profits of \$142 million. Revenue Canada, the income tax department, now wants Irving Oil to pay taxes on the \$142 million. When Irving Oil paid IRVCAL "inflated" prices for the crude, Revenue Canada says, it was merely giving money to itself. Irving Oil, on the other hand, contends that the payments to IRVCAL were business expenses.

The government and Irving Oil are now before the Federal Court of Canada arguing the case, which is expected to go to trial this year at a place to be chosen by the company, probably Montreal or Toronto. Revenue Canada precipitated the case in 1978 when it reassessed Irving

Oil's tax returns for 1971 to 1975 upward by \$142 million. Irving Oil appealed to the court, but so far only preliminary discovery hearings have been held.

A declaration filed by Irving Oil with the court reveals the arrangements by which SOCAL, its half owner, agreed to supply crude to the refinery. Although names of the companies involved changed during the period in question, the original deal didn't.

Irving Oil Ltd. itself was formed in 1973. FMO Co. Ltd. of Bermuda owned 51% of the shares and Standard Oil of British Columbia Ltd., now known as Chevron Canada Ltd., a SOCAL subsidiary, 49%. K.C. Irving, a Bermuda resident now in his 80s, who formerly lived in Saint John, owned all the shares of FMO. (Since 1976, another firm, Irving Oil Co. Ltd., has acquired part of Irving Oil Ltd. It is controlled by FMR Co. Ltd. of Bermuda, owned by K.C. Irving, and SOCAL's Canadian subsidiary.

IRVCAL, a company incorporated in Bermuda, a jurisdiction with no income taxes, was acquired by Irving companies in 1971 and became a wholly owned subsidiary of Irving Oil Ltd. in 1973. The deal struck was for Chevron Oil Sales Co. of Delaware, a SOCAL affiliate, to buy the crude and sell it to IRVCAL for resale to IRVCAL's parent company.

The government describes IRVCAL as a "sham" company. It sold the crude to Irving Oil at a profit and returned this profit to Irving Oil in the form of "tax-free dividends," which Irving Oil then used to help pay for the crude, the government says. The arrangement

between SOCAL, IRVCAL and Irving Oil, the government says, was a "paper" transaction existing solely for the "use of IRVCAL as a tax avoidance vehicle for accumulating offshore, in a tax-free jurisdiction, profits" for Irving Oil, and these profits "were to be returned" to Irving Oil "by way of tax-free dividends." IRVCAL rerouted \$137 million of the \$142 million back to Irving Oil in the form of these dividends, the government says.

The company says the prices the refinery paid "compare favorably" with those paid by other Canadian purchasers and were not "arbitrary" figures "determined so as to leave IRVCAL profitable." The company denies IRVCAL was a sham, but says if it is found to be that, then "the profits of IRVCAL should be attributed to SOCAL."

If the government wins, Irving Oil would likely have to pay millions in back taxes. How much is not clear, since the company can write off capital costs against the revenue. But once it's used these deductions for the years 1971 to 1975, the company could not use them again in other years, so additional taxes would eventually have to be paid.

The case may have even greater ramifications. Irving Oil is by no means the only Canadian company with fiscal arrangements in offshore tax havens. A government victory would surely bring tax collectors swarming down on an assortment of multinationals.

— Jon Everett



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Back to the good, old horse

He doesn't need oil, gasoline or expensive parts. And, as some P.E.I. woodlot owners are discovering, he's much better company than a bulldozer

It looks like a scene from some dusty, old family photo album: Along a forest trail, a bearded man and a black horse named King plod, dragging a pile of logs. But this is southeastern Prince Edward Island in the spring of 1982, and the logger, Hayward Kirsh, is a man with a very up-to-date idea.

Rising fuel prices, the high cost of heavy machinery used in logging, and a small-is-beautiful philosophy are all helping to rekindle an interest in the stately draft horse. Horses may never replace skidders, bulldozers and timberjacks, but P.E.I. Forestry officials are convinced there's a place for horse logging on the Island, especially for the small private woodlot owner such as Hayward Kirsh.

Kirsh, Toronto-born and raised ("I rode a horse when I was young but never had much experience with them"), uses a 10-year-old percheron to haul logs from his mostly wooded 112 acres in Melville. He makes his living by selling firewood, sawlogs and pulpwood. "I've worked with a tractor and a skidder," he says. "I'm not totally against that. But I'd much rather be working with a horse. It's much more pleasant."

Laurie Blue, a Little Sands farmer who makes extra income by selling his wood, agrees. "I always said there was a place for horses in my business," Blue says. He uses his two percherons and a Belgian for both woods and farm work. "We have a couple of tractors here but we use them as seldom as possible."

For the small woodlot owner—there are about 1,500 of them in P.E.I.—one big advantage in using horses is that they're a much smaller investment than, say, a tractor and a winch. A good horse costs \$1,500 to \$2,000, plus another \$500 for the harness. "It's not a question of having to put out \$30,000," Kirsh says.

Then there's the matter of fuel and maintenance. Machinery sucks up oil and gasoline, and breakdown times are often long and costly because parts have to come from some far-away city. Horses need only grain and hay, which are relatively cheap in P.E.I. Blue grows his own hay and grain on his farm and uses his horses to grow that. Kirsh simply trades his wood for feed from a neighboring farmer. He says he's better off financially spending the time logging than growing grain.

Draft horses were commonly used in P.E.I. woods until the early Sixties, even by large logging operations. Then work-

ers started leaving the woods for city jobs, and the timberjacks and bulldozers took over. The horses were turned out to pasture.

Paul McKnight, a forester with the P.E.I. Department of Forestry, says the draft horse will never regain its former glory, but people are expressing more and more interest in horses. "There is a niche for the horse, especially for the small, private woodlot owner."

Forestry officials like the fact that horses are ideal for work in environmentally sensitive areas: Unlike

to have so many more horses to do the same amount of work," he says.

Last year, Kirsh attended a four-week course at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro on the use of draft horses in commercial forest operations. He was so impressed by what he learned, he helped organize a field course in P.E.I. taught by agricultural college instructor Bob Williams. The Forestry Department gave the course its blessing, and Canada Employment supplied funding for a dozen students through a work-training program.

Kirsh recently bought a second horse to beef up his operation. (He had two but one died over the winter.) He has obtained a small contract to cut wood for the province, and this summer he'll test clear-cutting methods with his horses on an eight-acre plot. He concedes that the horse will never replace the machine—he still hires a bulldozer to build some of his



GORD JOHNSTON

Kirsh and King: A good horse makes a good working companion

heavy machinery, they don't scar the land. The horse is also ideal for selective cutting, where only certain trees are logged, because the damage to the remaining young trees and seedlings is minimal.

Kirsh maintains that a good man and a good horse can log as much in a day as a man and a machine. Forestry officials won't go quite that far. McKnight doubts that the daily production of a horse would compete with that of a 100-horsepower machine. "You'd just have

logging roads. But working with a horse in the woods, he says, is a satisfying experience. It's quiet and rhythmic work. And a well-trained and even-tempered horse is a good companion. "I'm making a buck," Kirsh says. "And I seem to be enjoying myself."

Laurie Blue has a similar outlook. He says a lot of the larger woodlot operators "look down their noses at me" for using horses. But when it comes to paying the gas and oil bills, he feels he has the last laugh.

— Rob Dykstra



The taste of authenticity.

Why getting there is not half the fun

When you fly to Halifax, the hardest part of the journey often starts after you land at the region's major airport

When a Halifax lawyer was returning to Nova Scotia from a business trip recently, he came close to exchanging blows with the taxi driver who drove him from the Halifax International Airport. The dispute was over the fare. The lawyer, who travels frequently, says it's the lack of consistency in taxi fares from the airport that drives him crazy: Cab drivers charge a flat rate, which can vary from \$17 to \$25, depending on whether you're coming or going and on the number of passengers. Occasionally, the lawyer says, "I've been taken to the cleaners."

Fights along the 37-km route from the region's biggest airport to its biggest city aren't a common occurrence, but disgruntled travellers are. Cab rates, they say, are confusing. Bus service is

David Snow of Transport Canada, who's responsible for ground transportation at the Halifax airport, says the city's size and distance from the airport—37 km, compared with the 22 km between Montreal and Dorval, for instance, or the 8 km between St. John's, Nfld., and its airport—make it tough to service. Two million travellers pass through the Halifax airport annually, and about 350,000 use commercial ground transportation.

Some, such as businessman Derek Oland, find it more convenient to drive their own cars to the airport and park for \$4 a day in the recently expanded airport lot. It saves the hassle of finding a cab, especially late at night. Bill Richardson, a frequent airline passenger, travels light on late-night flights from Toronto to



Taxi rates are confusing...

slow. And sometimes it's almost impossible to find a cab.

Airline Share-a-Cab charges customers who book at least an hour in advance \$8.25 per person. But if you grab a Share-a-Cab at the airport, without a reservation, you pay the regular taxi fare, about \$20. Airport buses, which seat 23 to 42 passengers, offer the cheapest transportation to Halifax—\$5 a person. The buses leave the airport after every flight, 30 minutes after the first suitcase slides down the baggage chute. Garland Greene, manager of a Halifax insurance company, says he finds the bus service "very slow." Waiting on the bus perhaps 20 minutes before it leaves the airport can be "a pain in the butt when you want to get home." Critics of the service say it might improve if Airport Transfer, the private company that operates it, made more frequent trips with smaller buses. But Bill Carter of Airport Transfer says the company never knows how many passengers to expect.

avoid waiting at the Halifax baggage counter. As soon as the plane touches down at about 11:20 p.m., he rushes outside the terminal to catch a cab. They disappear quickly.

Even with the hefty airport fare, taxi drivers often make more money driving in Halifax or Dartmouth late at night. A cabbie might drive a passenger to the airport, then wait hours before finding a return fare. Sometimes there isn't one, and the driver "deadheads" back to town.

Despite the risks of the trade, Patrick Gerety, a cab driver for 39 years, says the current system of ground transportation "does a much better job for the public" than the old one. Before the fall of 1979, Yellow Cab of Halifax and its sister company, Airport Transfer, had an exclusive contract with Transport Canada to serve the airport.

Gerety, a member of the airport taxi committee, which consists of drivers and Transport Canada officials, fought for more than 15 years to break the mono-

poly. Finally, in September, 1979, he participated in a four-hour, 157-cab blockade of the Halifax airport. Three months later, the airport was opened up to all taxi drivers who applied for an airport permit provided they met basic vehicle requirements. Halifax freelance writer Stephen Kimber says the open system works better than the previous "frustrating" arrangement. He used to have to call a cab from the city—a 30-minute drive—to collect him. "It's a lot easier to get a cab now," he says.

Not surprisingly, the bus and taxi companies that held the exclusive contract for 19 years don't agree that the current "open" system is an improvement. They claim it jeopardizes the bus service and often rips off the taxi-taking public. Carl Heggelin, comptroller of Airport Transfer and Yellow Cab, says there used to be better control and less overcharging on taxi fares. Although drivers



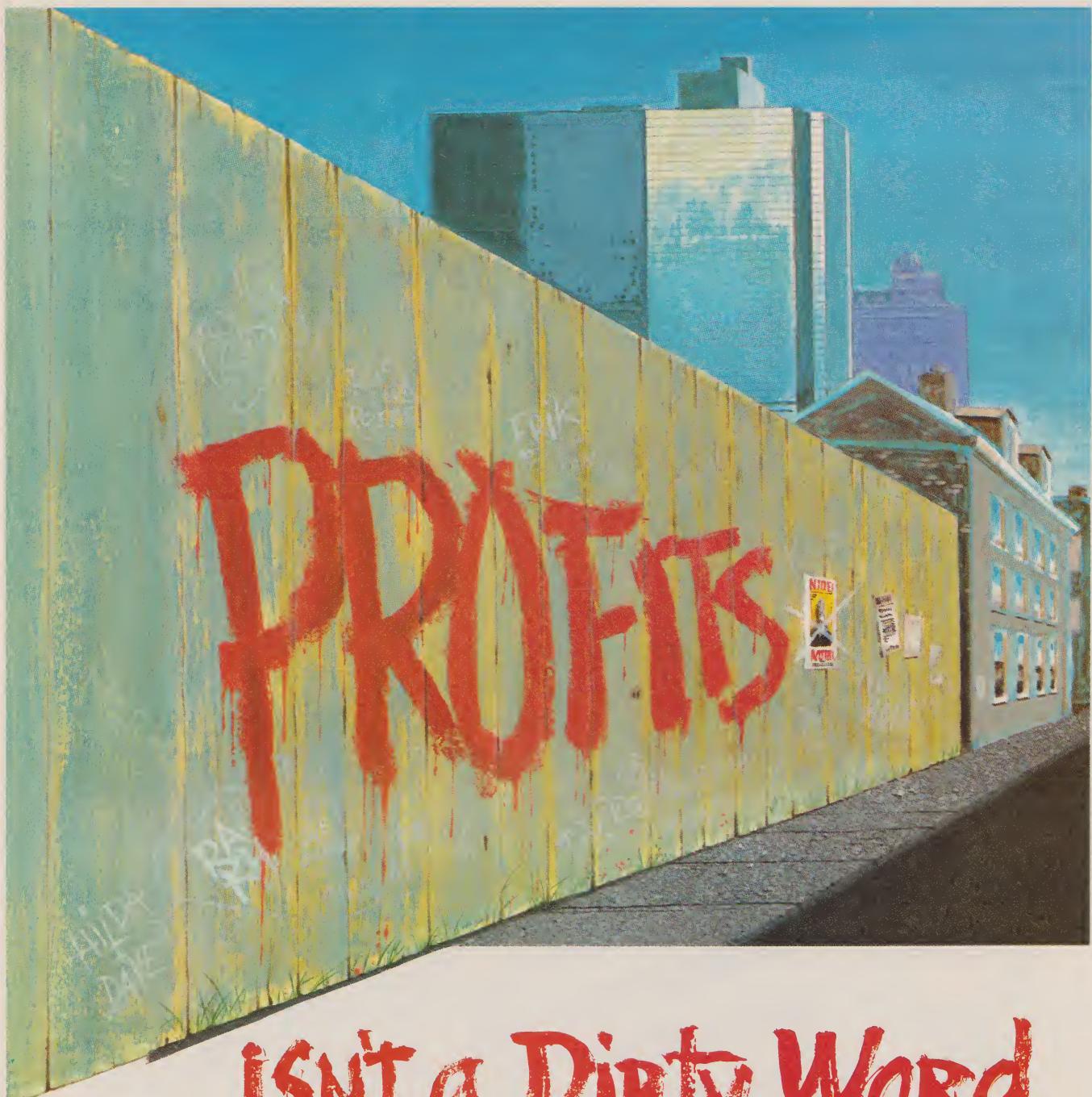
...and the bus service is painfully slow

can be suspended for overcharging, they're harder to catch now that more cab companies serve the airport, Heggelin says. "We knew it couldn't work."

Eventually, the bus service may have to be subsidized. The number of bus passengers hasn't changed much in the past few years. "In order to maintain that level of business," Heggelin says, "we're spending a heck of a lot of money." To prevent taxi drivers from "scooping up all the passengers" at Halifax hotels, the bus company hired a hotel ticket vendor and sold advance-tickets at hotel desks.

Most people agree that Halifax isn't big enough to support the variety of transportation services found in larger cities, such as those extra-long, shiny Cadillac and Lincoln limousines that charge basically the same rates as taxis. Halifax is still at the in-between stage, Transport Canada's David Snow says. "We're at the stage of growing from a small, larger centre to a large, smaller centre."

— Roma Senn



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The wrecking ball threatens old St. John's

City council is welcoming high-rise office buildings into the downtown area. That worries people who want to save the city's 19th-century charm

Driving into St. John's along one route, motorists pass a sign welcoming them to "the oldest city in North America." The city is proud of its past, and many of its old neighborhoods still stand, more or less unchanged since the turn of the century.

Tall, narrow chimneys and dormer windows project through the sloping shingled roofs of the wooden row houses that line most downtown residential streets. Many have been newly clapboarded or freshly painted, thanks to a wave of heritage consciousness that swept through the city a few years ago. But now some conservationists are worried: If the wrecking ball swings the wrong way, they fear, the city's 19th-century character will quickly be replaced by the cold, concrete greyness of many other North American cities.

What scares conservationists is the current city council's eagerness to attract high-rise office buildings downtown. If all development plans approved by council in the past year go ahead, St. John's will have an additional 2 million square feet of office space. "That's an indication of what's to come," says Tom Osborne, a city councillor and real estate agent.

One of the most enthusiastic promoters of downtown development is Mayor John Murphy. "Unless the downtown is encouraged to be the centre for finance and offices for offshore development," he says, "it could develop into a warehouse district."

Murphy hopes more office buildings will spring up as a result of changes council made to a city bylaw in February. The amendment increased to 200,000 square feet from 135,000 square feet the amount of floor space new office buildings on a section of Water Street—the downtown hub—are allowed to have. Councillors lifted the restriction to accommodate Scotiabank's proposed, 10-storey office building. The city also changed the bylaw a few years ago to allow the Toronto-Dominion Bank to put up a similar building a few blocks away.

One opponent of the

amendment is Deputy Mayor Shannie Duff, who's at odds with the mayor on the idea of what the downtown should be. She says the city core should be a "people place"—not a financial district that closes down at 5 p.m.—and should contain residential and retail components that serve each other.

"What we're really into is a question of ego," Duff says of the planned high-rise projects. "The Bank of Nova Scotia wants a higher building than Toronto-Dominion. Each one wants to go a little higher than the one before. That's not the kind of thing a city should bend over backwards to." Duff says the process of getting developments through city hall has become a "free for all" uncontrolled by any permanent regulations. "What we've done is serve notice to any developers out there that you can come in and ask for anything at all, and you're going to get it."

The mayor argues that there are too few people living and working downtown

to keep the city centre alive. Having "a quaint little downtown doesn't put money in the till," he says. "You need more people living and working downtown. We need office buildings and condominiums." And councillor Andy Wells dismisses opponents of big downtown developments as "the knapsack generation." If the deputy mayor had her way, he says, she'd have the city plan "cast in concrete."

The city's heritage bylaw once was considered the best in Canada. But Vernon French, chairman of the St. John's Heritage Foundation, says council has whittled away the bylaw's edge by allowing more, higher buildings in the Heritage Conservation Area. He fears the next few years will bring further high-rise development. "It's a very pessimistic outlook, really," he says. That outlook is not improved by the foundation's setbacks in recent months. Its funding from federal and provincial governments dried up, making it impossible to continue buying and restoring old houses, and the paid staff, which sometimes assisted private restoration projects, had to be laid off. The foundation will continue as a voluntary organization, but French says

its role will be limited to that of a lobby group.

The mayor promises that council's high-rise plans won't affect downtown residential areas. But Duff is not reassured. By allowing big developments, she argues, council is letting down people who bought homes in the heritage area. For one thing, more big buildings mean more traffic.

Shane O'Dea, chairman of the Newfoundland Historic Trust's heritage preservation committee, says the swing towards high-rise projects will hurt local businesses most. High-rise buildings usually are occupied by national firms because small businesses can't afford the rent, he says. So office buildings, which generate traffic, will drive out local businesses, which generate money into the Newfoundland economy, he says. "We'll become tenants in our own home."

If the present trend continues, O'Dea fears, St. John's could become "a very unattractive, inefficient, anti-citizen city. It could also be quite uneconomic."

— Pat Roche



The Duffitt Building (background), first of the high-rises



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NISSAN



COVER STORY

Here's a sport worth a cartwheel or two

It combines the grace of dance, the daring of acrobatics, the strength and stamina of team sports. That's one reason gymnastics is becoming—for girls, especially—the hockey of the Eighties

By Roma Senn

Athletes in action: Melissa Mathers (far left) in a tumbling sequence; Lesley Mounce (top left) in a perfect handstand; Ann Marie Wong (bottom) in a ribbon routine



Taira Smith and coach Vivian van Buuren

Taira Smith, eight years old, slim and pixie-faced, bounds into the Halifax gym and climbs on a wooden box to reach a horizontal bar that's more than twice her height. In a flash, she's hanging on the bar upside-down, monkey style. A minute later, she's cartwheeling down a carpeted foam tumbling strip. Over her aqua-colored leotard, she wears a yellow Halifax Tumblebugs T-shirt. Taira is a five-year veteran of the Tumblebugs club, one of about 50 gymnastics clubs in the Atlantic region. "I started doing cartwheels when I was three," she says. "My mother said, 'If you like cartwheels, why not take gymnastics?'"

That's exactly what she did. Like about 4,000 other kids—mostly girls—across the region, Taira took to this sport with a zeal that's made gymnastics the female equivalent of hockey. Across Canada, more than 50,000 kids are registered with the Ottawa-based Canadian Gymnastics Federation, but close to 100,000 participate in the sport at school and through private clubs and YWCA programs that are springing up everywhere. This month, 200 young gymnasts will compete in the National Gymnastics Championships 1982, taking place May 20 to 23 at Dalplex, the swanky new sports complex on the campus of Halifax's Dalhousie University.

What's behind the gymnastics craze? It started in the Seventies, when, thanks to television, athletes such as Olga Korbut of the Soviet Union (a silver and gold medal winner at the 1972 Olympics) and Nadia Comaneci of Romania (a bronze, silver and gold medal winner at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal) became international stars. "Kids just fell in love with Nadia," says Gina MacDonald, chairman of this year's national gymnastics championship. When her daughter, Katie, 9, then three, saw Comaneci perform on TV, she jumped on a picnic table to try to copy the superstar's routine. A year

later, Katie enrolled in a gymnastics program.

Amanda MacNeill, 9, a member of the Halifax Tumblebugs, attends a three-hour gymnastics class every week and, like most young gymnasts, practises at home every day. "It never gets to be like homework," she says. "I do splits (spreading legs at a 180-degree angle) when I'm watching TV." On a typical day at the Tumblebug gym, a converted warehouse in the city's commercial north end, you can find kids aged three to 15 practising their skills—walkovers, cartwheels, sole circles, hip circles, aerials. Today, a teen-age coach guides a pigtailed pre-schooler in a pink leotard through a back flip on a carpeted beam 12 inches off the floor. "Tuck in your bum," senior coach Vivian van Buuren instructs another gymnast. The gym's a jumble of equipment—foam floor mats, high beams, vaults, uneven parallel bars—and a blur of movement. Some of the kids seem to be made of rubber. They tumble 360 degrees from feet to hands to feet, twist in flight, moving in ways that hardly seem possible. You won't find slab here.

Gymnastics is an all-round sport that van Buuren considers fundamental to other sports because of its emphasis on agility, strength and co-ordination. In ancient Greece, athletes practised gymnastics to train for combative sports. Today in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, hockey and soccer players include it in their training programs. Gymnastics is defined as "a system of exercises for the balanced development of the body." But it's more. It combines the grace of dance, the daring of acrobatics, the strength and stamina of team sports.

"They can be tomboys," van Buuren says of the gymnasts, "while still retaining their femininity." The contrast works beautifully. Girls with perfect posture, dressed in sloppy T-shirts or leotards and footless tights, manage dance steps, leaps, runs, jumps and turns on a 120-cm high beam, a padded strip as wide as a man's hand. Lesley Mounce, 15, sprints half the length of the 7,000-square-foot gym, bounces high on a springboard, places her hands on the vault (a long, padded saddle), and, with legs straight up in the air, flips over.

Jennifer Stewart, 15, lithe and long-legged, leans upright against the high beam. With the help of another gymnast, she lifts her leg straight up to her face. She enrolled in the gymnastics club less than a year ago.

The Canadian Gymnastics Federation sets gymnastics standards and chooses the few exceptionally talented gymnasts who compete nationally. For them, the gym becomes a second home.

National competitors such as Melissa Mathers, 12, put in 20 hours every week

COVER STORY



National competitors (from left) Melissa Mathers, Lesley Mounce, Pam Bussey

at the gym. Every day at 3:30 p.m., she leaves Gorsebrook School in the south end of Halifax, catches a ride in a car pool and heads across town to the gym. By 4 p.m., Melissa, a muscular girl with thick, blond hair, is limbering up on the floor mats with a handful of other gymnasts who compete nationally. The floor routines are especially demanding. The gymnasts give the coil-filled mat a pounding, attempting their tumbling sequences. When Melissa's 70-second routine is over, she runs outside for air, then rests while her gym mates perform similar routines. Halfway through the session, there's a 15-minute snack break. At 8 p.m., it's time to go home, to supper and homework. Next day, it's the same routine.

Ten years ago, such dedication to the sport was almost unheard of in Atlantic Canada. Today, Nova Scotia—which has the best gymnastics record in the region—is ranked between fourth and sixth in Canadian gymnastics. "The level of gymnastics has come up so much in the last couple of years," coach van Buuren says. When she moved to Halifax seven years ago for graduate studies in physical education at Dalhousie, there was little gymnastics instruction in the province. (Nova Scotia's oldest club, the Dartmouth Titans, started in 1968.) She

began teaching a group of 10 girls and soon had requests for instruction from about 100 more. They trained in gyms throughout the city until last fall, when they got a permanent home, one of the few in the region.

New Brunswick ranks second to Nova Scotia in artistic gymnastics—the brand of gymnastics most youngsters are involved in—but New Brunswick leads the way in modern rhythmic gymnastics, a system of floor exercises developed in Sweden. The province is home to the national champion, Debbie Bryant of Moncton, and five other members of the 16-member national team. This month, New Brunswick was host to the Canadian Modern Rhythmic Championships, with 200 athletes from seven provinces participating.

Romanian-born coach Mariana Roman introduced the dance-like sport to New Brunswick 11 years ago when she joined the faculty of the Université de Moncton. Modern rhythmic gymnasts perform to music, using balls, ribbons, hoops, clubs and ropes. Ann Marie Wong, 20, a Dalhousie University student who's competed in two world championships, calls the sport "an extension of dance."

"Expression is the most important thing," says Michelle Crawford of

Moncton, a member of the national team. "It has to touch the people who watch."

Crawford, 20, who has competed in Bulgaria and France, was spotted by Roman at a provincial artistic gymnastics meet four years ago. Today, she's one of 365 registered modern gymnasts in New Brunswick, which has a membership second only to Ontario. In most other provinces, the sport's just catching on. "We just don't have the leaders," says Anthea Bellemare of Dalhousie University's physical education department. Bellemare taught herself modern gymnastics "on my living room floor" about 10 years ago and later introduced her students to the sport. Because it exercises all areas of the body and can be practised by females of any age, modern gymnastics will have wide appeal in the next two decades, Bellemare predicts. At the moment, however, it's not part of the physical education curriculum in schools.

Even artistic gymnastics—the more popular, more athletic brand of gymnastics—isn't as widely taught as many would like. Lynne Maybee, a former gymnast and coach of the Dartmouth Titans, says many school boards and gym teachers see it as a high-risk sport. Gymnasts do suffer injuries—mostly sprains and pulled muscles—but good coaching and equipment minimize the risk.

In Prince Edward Island, elementary schools recently adopted gymnastics as a major part of the physical education program. "We're realizing the benefits of gymnastics in developing motor skills and balance," says Marilyn Kane, president of the Island Gymnastics Association. At the Island Gymnastics Academy, Charlottetown's new gymnastics club, children as young as one year can enrol in the program.

Truro, N.S., was quick to recognize the value of a permanent facility and full-time coaching. As a result, the Cobiquid Spartans turn out some of the region's best gymnasts. The club was the first to hire a full-time coach in 1975 and runs the region's best-equipped gym. "Girls here are doing things that we thought were impossible," says Truro's Ken Shephard, president of the N.S. Gymnastics Association.

Gymnasts everywhere, in fact, are developing newer, harder skills all the time. When Lynne Maybee started the sport 22 years ago, gymnasts rarely managed triple somersaults (in mid air) from the floor. Today kids do them from the high beam.

But, for young people like Pam Bussey, 12, of Halifax, the attraction of gymnastics is more than the thrill of pulling off back flips, cartwheels and triple somersaults. "I like it," she says, wiggling her hips, "because it keeps you in shape."

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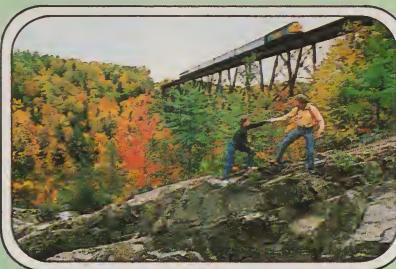
Toronto's skyline stars the CN Tower.

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FOLKS

Some days, Katherine McManus of St. John's, Nfld., sells more history than hardware, but she doesn't really mind. "I'm in a tourist attraction," she shrugs. "What can I do?" McManus opened Homeworks in the 150-year-old Christ Church in Quidi Vidi Village a year and a half ago, when the building needed a tenant and her idea for a renovation supply shop needed a home. Newfoundland Historic Trust, formed to save the little wooden church after the Anglican synod decided to demolish the building in 1966, leases it to McManus, who made few changes in the interior of the church. She was concerned about reactions to running a business in a church—"I didn't want to offend anyone"—but so far, she's had no problems. A former English teacher, waitress and civil servant, McManus "thought about the store for four years before I got the nerve to do it." Working on her old house in downtown St. John's, she often found it hard to get the hardware and replacement parts she wanted. Her stock is a blend of old and new: Doors, doorknobs, keyhole covers, locks, knockers, latches, window pulls and

year, Lewis has been appointed chairman of the National Show and Convention of the African Violet Society of Canada, to be held in Charlottetown May 13 to 15. In previous national events, Lewis has won eight first prizes, and in local shows, she averages up to 35 first-place ribbons a show. Last year, she won a special award at the national show in Calgary for the plant travelling the farthest. To transport the winning plant, she tucked it beneath her plane seat. "It travelled well," she says. Lewis says violets are her favorite houseplant—"you can grow them year-round"—but she has no plans to increase her stock, even though they don't take up much space. "I'm at capacity now," she says.

when she won a nationwide talent contest, the Canadian Mozart Singers Competition. Her prizes were \$2,000 and a one-year contract with the Canadian Opera Company of Toronto, which she joins in June. Saunders, who is bilingual, credits the musical training she received at



McManus: Working in a tourist attraction

catches, hinges, switchplates, boot scrapers, bathroom fixtures, fire screens, brass curbs. Her unusual wares look comfortable under the church's vaulted wood ceiling and high arched windows overlooking Quidi Vidi Gut. And the villagers (Quidi Vidi, now officially part of St. John's, remains its own place) will call her if anything is amiss at night.

It takes Hilda Lewis of Charlottetown two whole hours a day to look after her houseplants. She has a lot of houseplants—300 African violets in more than 100 varieties and in shades of white, pink, red and violet. In the past 10 years, she's become an expert in the care of this temperamental plant. "Conditions have to be just right," she says. "Natural light from north and west windows is best. Southern exposure is too hot." This



BUCHHEIT/PHOTO



Lewis: Hundreds of blooming plants



JOE STONE

Saunders: A giant career step

Moncton's Notre Dame d'Acadie convent school for laying the foundations of her success. She began studying piano at age seven and switched to voice about five years later. She realized she had talent because, she says, "I kept winning at festivals." She now holds a master's degree in performance from the Université de Montréal. In 1980 she was soloist with L'Ensemble Vocale de Montréal on its tour of France, and in 1981 she performed with the Opera Piccola (a touring program for young singers, based in Victoria, B.C.) which toured three provinces, including Newfoundland. Saunders hopes to spend at least two years with the Canadian Opera Company and then test the international waters. By that time, people won't even have to ask the diminutive soprano what she does.



Duncan: Apple blossoms and pink organdy

Mary Armour's 18th birthday was perfect. On that warm June day, as the scent of apple blossoms drifted over the Annapolis Valley, Mary stood among a bevy of young women on a Kentville, N.S., hillside, wearing a handmade pink organdy dress with flounces and bows and a matching hat. Then a gentleman stepped up to her and said: "Miss Mary, may I congratulate you.... You've been chosen queen." Replacing her organdy hat with a wreath of apple blossoms, Mary Armour of Middleton, N.S., became Queen Annopolis I, monarch of the first Annapolis Valley Apple Blossom Festival. The day was June 1, 1933. Today, Mary Armour Duncan of Lawrencetown, N.S., recalls those happy events of 50 years ago: "I was thrilled, but I had another girl picked out. I really thought she would win." The festivities included a street parade, maypole danc-

ing, music from choirs and bands and an evening street dance. That evening, as Mary sat on the Middleton IODE float, watching the street dancing, a young trombone player from Lawrencetown caught her eye. And she caught his. Fred Duncan, 19, asked her for a date that evening. This August, Mary and Fred Duncan celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary. Fred, a retired station agent for the Dominion Atlantic Railway, and Mary now have two children and six grandchildren. In the past 50 years, Mary says, she hasn't missed many apple blossom festivals, and she remains a fervent festival booster. As the festival gets under way again the last week of this month, Mary Armour Duncan will be cheering from the sidelines. Maybe, just for a moment, she'll think of pink organdy.

DAVID NICHOLS

stance, the Canadian Forces and Sealand Helicopters Ltd. of St. John's each volunteered a helicopter to airlift wrecks from the bottom of a steep embankment. In one community, when a tow truck couldn't reach wrecks on a frozen bog, teachers and students tied a rope on the cars and hauled them out. To get people involved, Meeker publicized the campaign on a television news show and mentioned on television the names of people who helped out. He also persuaded the provincial Environment Department to put up \$35,000 in prize money. This year's campaign is also aimed at snowmobile wrecks on the Labrador coast. The success of Collect-a-Wreck, Meeker says, proved something about community spirit. "People are saying the community spirit is dead, but I think in the last couple of years, we found out that it's not."

When Glenn Murray, 30, left his native Sydney Mines, N.S., to study in Fredericton, N.B., he never dreamed his years at the University of New Brunswick would turn him into a practitioner of an ancient craft derided by modern scholars. But today Murray is among New Brunswick's best-known astrologers. "I was introduced to astrology by a fellow student," says Murray, a writer-broadcaster who does a weekly astrology program on CIHI, Fredericton, and writes for national astrology magazines. "At first I thought it was nonsense, but after studying it, I saw it wasn't." Astrology says that the positions of the heavenly bodies at the time of your birth influences your life. Your astrological birth-chart, Murray says, is a "blueprint" of your nature, which outlines your strengths and weaknesses. And he can produce a complex birth-chart at a speed that would seem supernatural to a cone-capped wizard of the past. He uses a computer, sometimes going into shopping malls to produce charts for all comers. Besides his astrology work, Murray writes plays for the CBC and last year co-produced a calendar, *The Maritimes 1982*, which contained 2,500 historical notes and sold 7,500 copies. This month he'll speak at the first Canadian astrologers' convention in Winnipeg. Murray sees a bright future for astrology, despite the badmouthing it gets from rationalists. He should know. It's written in the stars.

They don't call Ron Ferguson "Superbrain" for nothing. Ferguson, a 36-year-old native of Sydney, N.S., is so smart, in fact, he and his wife, Paola, are flying to London, England, this month on the strength of his formidable intelligence. He's the national winner of *Today* magazine's "Superbrain" contest, which offered the one-week London trip as a grand prize. The contest was part of a membership drive by MENSA, an international social club whose members must have an IQ in the top 2% or 3% of the population. A Vancouver resident since 1969, Ferguson graduated from Dalhousie University in Halifax in 1967 with first class honors in mathematics. Since then, he's operated a natural foods store and restaurant and done post-graduate work in math. The Fergusons, who have two children, now run a European-based furniture franchise. Ferguson says it was Paola—a former resident of London—who urged him to enter the contest; she was eager to visit friends there. In a field of about 2,000 entries, Ferguson won the top score in tests devised and supervised by MENSA. Since the announcement of his win, he says, he's been putting up with "a little bit of teasing" from family and friends. But then, they might have known he was sharper than the average guy. For relaxation, Ferguson dabbles in astronomy, math and physics. And, like millions of others, he's also tackled Rubik's cube. He solved it in about five hours.

Florida? Are you kidding? It's so very, very common

It made me feel a cut above your average Canadian sun-seeker to say, "Florida is one place in which I have never for a moment had even the faintest interest in visiting." Florida was so vulgar, don't you know, so gaudy, so bereft of the thrilling cultural distinctiveness of Trinidad, say, or the sun-drenched coasts of the Mediterranean. It was a place for the over-mature and the immature, for bald or woolly-headed old folks, for kiddies hooked on cartoons, for mindless, horny college boys with stupid slogans on their T-shirts, for schoolteachers who each year vainly try to turn the March break into the fulfilment of naive yearnings. Clearwater...Miami...St. Petersburg...Daytona. The very names symbolized both the dreariness and extravagance of money-grubbing, pleasure-bent, self-indulgent Ammurica.

Well, I finally got to Florida. Business motives inspired my trip, I assure you, and not the crass Florida imperative to "Enjoy." One day, south of Clearwater, I drove down the Gulf of Mexico coast in a small, white, air-conditioned Ford—\$109 (US) for an entire week, incidentally. I was seeking a room for the night, but the scowling message outside hundreds of motels and condominium stacks was always the same dismal paradox: "Welcome. No Vacancy." Traffic choked in the steamy glare. Seedy, neon-decorated bars huddled like boxes full of shadow. The highway was an avenue of glitzy gift shops, tawdry fast-food factories, greasy breakfast bargains, a pugnacious jumble of signs, and dusty real-estate joints displaying washed-out snapshots of bungalows that would never be paradise for anyone but mosquitoes, gnats and lizards. Sun-grilled on a rack of pavement, this whole, hot, ticky-tacky strip was a nightmare for those who care about tasteful town planning. Just as I'd thought, Florida was truly a world capital of man-made ugliness.

I eventually found a "vacancy," paid in advance, went out for dinner. Darkness fell like a landslide, and luke rain came in sheets. I was tired and I wanted to go to bed, but I couldn't find the motel. Was it the Blue Waters, the Blue Lagoon or the Sleepy Lagoon? Was it the Sea Isles or the Happy Days? They all looked alike, sleazy dozens of them, and my room key was just a key like any other. (I felt as foolish and helpless as I once had in Lisbon when, at 2 a.m., I couldn't make a Portuguese taxi driver understand where my hotel was.) After 30 minutes, I did rediscover the "efficiency unit" for

which I'd already paid, and I flopped. The bedroom window was open, I could hear surf slapping sand.

I was 70 feet from the beach. In the morning, I pulled on my trunks, exposed my pale northern skin to the onshore zephyr, then walked into a wave. It broke over me gently, sucked at my legs, let me go. I lay on my back while the sun shone in my face, and the southerly current carried me toward the Indian Rocks fishing pier. I floated like driftwood, and finally let the waves roll me up on the shore. Later, I found immaculate sea shells, the size of fingernails, tucked into my bathing-suit pocket. I took a fresh-water shower on the motel beach, stretched out on a deck chair to allow the sun and wind to towel my body, and assessed the shapes, tans and marital status of the early-morning strollers. Fish-eating birds walked with them, unafraid. Seagulls with black heads zoomed along in gangs, flying low over a beach that stretched out of sight. I considered the moving fronds of palms. I caught myself humming, and felt strangely fine all over.

Time for breakfast. In a restaurant on the highway, that celebration of vulgarity, a girl who looked like a 19-year-old Angie Dickinson, flashed me a smile that would have melted an iceberg (not that she'd ever seen one), took my order, sang, "All righty," returned with the food in five minutes, chirped, "There you go," and twitched back into the kitchen. Some sort of horseplay was going on in there. I had two eggs, two sausages, two syrup-soaked pancakes, two cups of coffee, and a glass of orange juice. All for \$2.75. As I left, Angie ordered me to have a nice day. (During the recent space shot, the government arranged for the children of one astronaut to speak to him by radio. They shouted in unison, "We love you, daddy. Have a nice day.") The odd thing was, it was still only 8:15 a.m., and I was having a nice day.

The highway didn't look so awful now. It was still garish, sure, but it was indigenously garish, culturally appropriate like a bazaar in Marrakesh. It was a pure, unfettered expression of American free enterprise, hustle, organization, and fast service for a fast buck. Was the sun getting to me? I passed Margaret's Beauty Salon; Gwen's Candy Kitchen; Joe Ros' American Italian Restaurant; Giovanni's Bakery; Joan's Spare Room (souvenirs, antiques); Jody's Furniture (featuring \$97-waterbeds); Adam's Rib ("ribs like



in Cincinnati"); Eve's Leaves (women's clothing); a joint that proudly advertised "pizza by Lou DeMarco," as though pizzas were dresses and Lou a fashion designer; and Buoys and Gulls Casual Fashions. What was wrong with Margaret, Joan, Gwen, Giovanni, pizza-proud Lou and all the other local buoys and gulls peddling convenience to hordes of tourists? Now I saw the highway not as a monument to commercial construction gone berserk, but as an All-American corridor of convenience that flanked mile upon mile of warm ocean and soft sand.

In such a setting, there's something to be said for shops that sell 20 kinds of scrumptious ice-cream and six kinds of hot dogs. There's something to be said for having a superb delicatessen within 100 yards of the beach, and for 24-hour grocery shops (even if they do display signs reading, "Trespassers and Looters. Beware of flying objects. They may be bullets"). There's something to be said for a store where, if the mood strikes you, you can have your diamond set "while U wait," or get a pedicure; eat Greek salad or a Godfather submarine sandwich; buy *The New York Times*, *The Globe and Mail*, or a T-shirt that says, "Take this job and shove it." There is also something to be said for the Indian Rocks Seafood shop.

The salesgirl there wasn't your Angie Dickinson type; she was more your Ali McGraw type. She said the grouper cheeks were succulent that day but I settled for a half-pound of sweet, little Florida scallops for \$2.25. Back at the motel, I put them in a bowl with chopped green onion, green pepper, canned pineapple, and California Chablis (\$3.89 a bottle). I marinated them in the cold refrigerator while I lolled in the warm ocean. Then I brought them down to the beach with a tumbler of the white wine. That great, balmy, sea-fragrant Gulf wind stroked my body. The sun dropped toward the yachts on the horizon. The sky pinkened, and already I was getting a tan. I ate the raw scallops with my fingers, sipped the wine, and in my quiet way felt strangely like a mindless, horny college boy. A cliché slipped into my mind: "Don't knock it till you've tried it." You know, that might look good on a T-shirt.

Atlantic HOMES

Build a home patio,
be a landscaping artist,
know your legal rights
as a homeowner
and settle the
paint *versus* siding
question



Raising the roof in Newfoundland

How Lock-Wood helped resolve the problem of getting a bigger house without moving.

When you can't build on, build up.

That's how Sonia Dawe Ryan and architect Phillip Pratt solved her housing problem.

"I lived in the plainest house on the smallest lot on the prettiest street in all St. John's. I couldn't bear to leave."

But her boxy, ugly-duckling bungalow was just not big enough for herself, a busy mother/housewife/business executive, and her two growing sons. The solution: add a 1200 square foot second story, and at the same time, completely revamp the main floor.

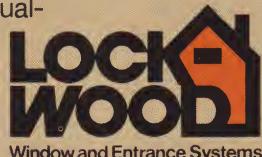
Let there be maximum light, was one of the working dictums. Plenty of windows, but a high regard for energy efficiency. It was logical to specify Lock-Wood.

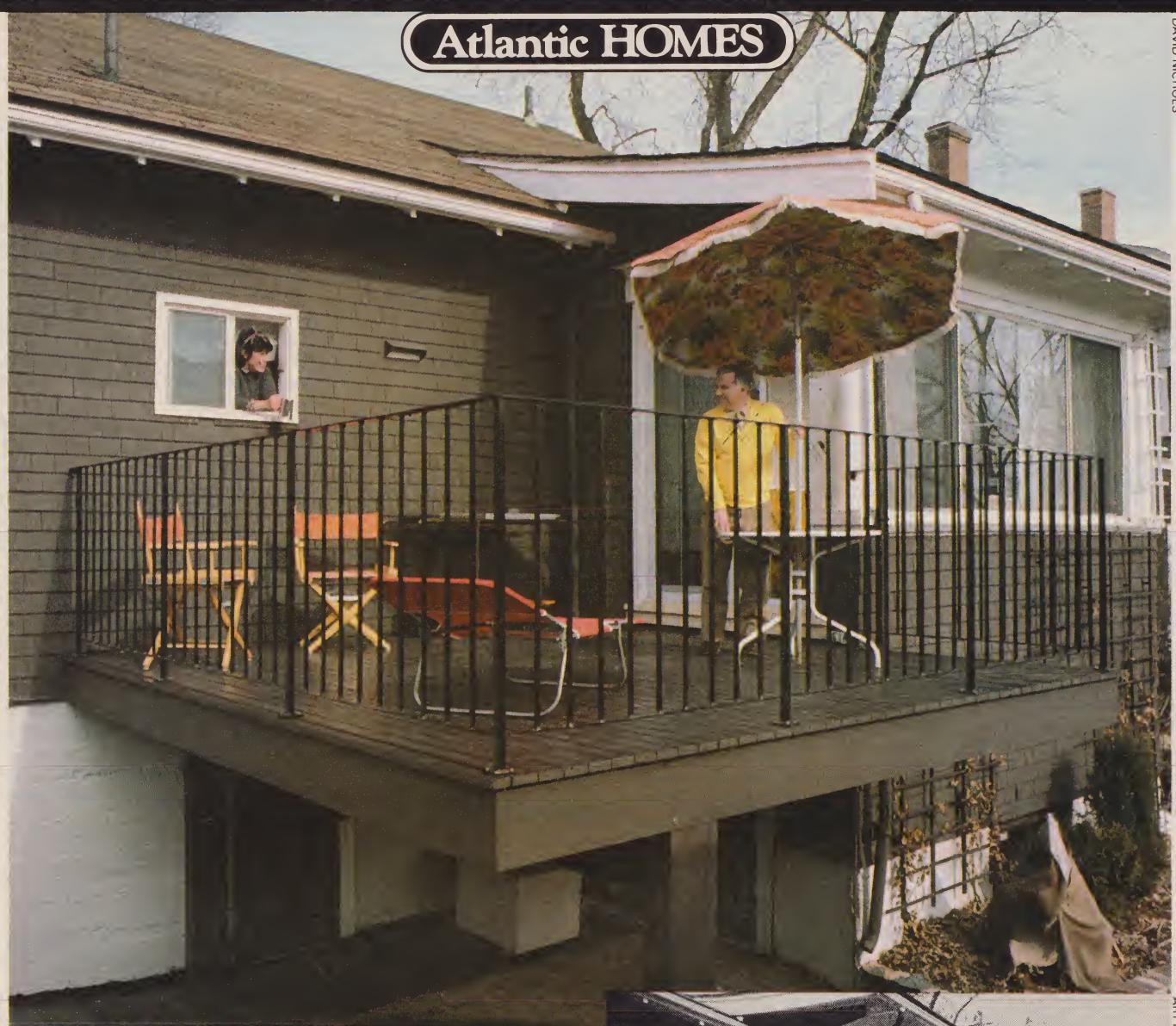
Lock-Wood window frames are solid wood (an 1800 times better insulator than aluminum); and the wood components are saturated in preservative before assembly, to ensure protection of critical, though hidden joints. You also get quality hardware. Excellence in design and construction. Double glazing is standard.

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Let's give Mrs. Dawe Ryan the last word: "Today, I live in a beautiful, light, energy-efficient, spacious home. On the smallest lot on the prettiest street in all St. John's."





The Irwin house before (below) and after building a sundeck

BUILDING IN THE BACKYARD

One way to increase your living space: Extend it into the outdoors by building a patio or sundeck. If you can use a hammer and saw, you can do it yourself

By Sue MacLeod

Out in the backyard on a lazy, sun streaked afternoon, hamburgers sizzle on the barbecue and icy cold beer is served in steamy, frosted glasses. When the living is easy, a growing number of Atlantic Canadians retreat to the backyard sundeck or patio, using it as the focal point of warm-weather relaxation. As spiralling interest rates push the dream of a larger home out of the reach of most,

the deck or patio performs a second important function: Increasing a less-than-ideal living space by extending it into the outdoors. And because a backyard addition is usually designed by the homeowner himself, it can be easily tailored to suit his tastes and lifestyle.

Art Irwin, a conservation co-ordinator with the Nova Scotia Department of Mines and Energy, is looking forward to



enjoying his new backyard living space this summer. Last fall, the Irwins hired a carpenter to build a 15-by-15-foot sundeck on the southwest side of their Halifax home where it would capture the warming rays of the afternoon sun. "We had been thinking about adding a deck for years," Irwin says. The Irwins' deck, which can be entered through a sliding patio door from an adjacent sunporch,

Building in the backyard

also borders on a kitchen window through which food and beverages can be served.

When Allistair and Lorraine MacLeod of Sydney hired a contractor to build a contemporary cedar home six years ago, they included two cedar plank patios in their plans. "The back patio gets the morning sun," explains Lorraine MacLeod, "so we often have our breakfast out there on summer mornings." The MacLeods do a lot of summertime entertaining on their side patio. Two stately redwood trees, growing between the planks, add a touch of drama; cedar flower boxes are filled with geraniums and other colorful plants.

Sondra Hardy, a social program coordinator in Halifax, is one downtown resident who refuses to be put off by the limitations of a 25-by-50-foot yard. She chose a circular brick patio as the focal point of her ambitious backyard renovation, and flanked it with rows of Japanese cherry trees and flower beds. She added steps leading from her basement and, for a rustic mood, an old verandah newel post with a light on top. "Since I have such a small backyard, I wanted to make it into an outdoor sitting area," she says. With the assistance of a local contracting firm, she has created a tranquil urban escape.

Walter and Sharon Kubry had much more room to work with on their large lakefront lot in Mount Uniacke, N.S. Kubry, a social worker, designed a rectangular gazebo, measuring 20 by 14 feet. He used unplaned lumber for all but the floor and the built-in bench seats to create a comfortable, country look. He added a trellis roof to provide an enclosed feeling yet allow for lots of sunlight, and several hanging planters. "It is a really warm and comfortable place to sit with a few friends," he notes, "but we have also held dances there for 15 and 20 people." Kubry, who built his gazebo himself three years ago, estimates the total cost of his materials at \$600.

Building a backyard structure yourself, as Kubry did, is a rewarding and economical option. "The trend is toward the do-it-yourselfer," says Charlie MacDonald, manager of Schurman Construction in Charlottetown. "If you're looking at a project that will take two or three days, paying \$300 to \$500 to a contractor could almost double your costs." Orrin Scott, assistant general manager at Piercy Supplies in Halifax, agrees that the construction of a basic wooden sundeck falls within the range of a home handyman's skills. "Anyone who can use a hammer and saw can also build a brick patio," adds Alf Romaine of

Nova Scotia's L.E. Shaw Ltd., masonry suppliers. "It's a simple matter of selecting your pattern and following it. It can even become an enjoyable family project, taking no more than a weekend or two." Romaine, who used sand jointing rather than mortar on his own patio, suggests you contact a professional if you choose mortar and are uncertain of your abilities or pressed for time. Whether you hire a contractor or tackle the project yourself, the first step is to decide which type of backyard construction will best suit your needs and which material to use.

A deck, a platform raised above the ground, is a popular choice for sloped lots. If your yard is very steep, a second-storey-level sundeck may be your only reasonably priced option. Wood is the standard deck material because a raised platform must be lightweight and capable of spanning small distances without too much flexing. Orrin Scott of Piercy Supplies estimates the minimum cost of materials for a basic wooden sundeck at \$500, including spruce joists and posts, verandah decking, nails and stain. By selecting luminized lumber (pressure-treated to resist rotting), you will triple the expected lifespan of your deck, but you will also increase your costs by as much as 40%. Tools you will need

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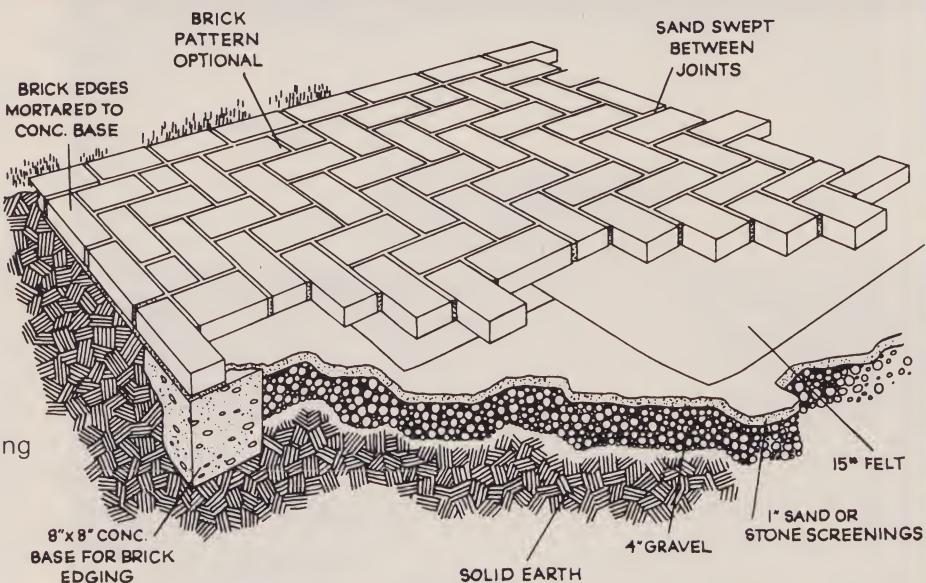
garden rake

broom

garden hoe

MATERIALS:

Brick, sand, cement, gravel (consult estimating tables), mortar for restraining edges, roofing felt to fit area



include a saw (a power saw will speed the project up considerably), a hammer, a drill level and a square. Select top-quality materials such as rust-proof fasteners, hot-dipped galvanized nails and brass or stainless steel screws. The inexperienced carpenter will also want to keep the following points in mind: Look at your plans carefully and scale them down if necessary; apply preservative to untreated wood or to any luminized wood that has

Estimating Material

BRICK SIZE	BRICKS PER 100 sq. ft.	Square feet per ton, Sand & Gravel		
		1" thick	2" thick	4" thick
2 1/4 x 3 3/4 x 8	400			
2 1/4 x 3 5/8 x 7 5/8	450			
1 5/8 x 4 x 8	450			
		sand	276	138
		gravel	229	116
				58



4.



5.



6.



7.



3.



2.



1.

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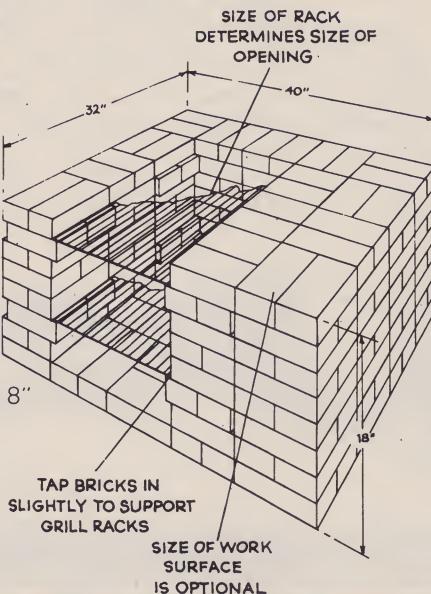
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Building in the backyard

Mortarless Barbecue

Tools:
2' hand level

Materials:
236 solid brick units $3\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4} \times 8$ "
2 grill racks



Before you start this easy-to-build mortarless barbecue, select the site carefully. It must be absolutely level and stable. A concrete slab is best.

Then buy the grill racks: Sometimes it's hard to find certain sizes. You can adjust the construction of the barbecue to fit the grill racks you buy.

As you follow the pattern shown, tap in the bricks supporting the grill racks. Lay a two-by-four length of wood edgewise to the row of bricks, and tap them in with a hammer.

You should be able to complete the barbecue in a couple of hours.

been exposed by cutting; use cement footings for your posts to prevent them from sinking into the ground; be sure that the fastening of the deck to the house is completely secure.

A patio is a platform formed on the ground and situated on or near ground

level. Some popular patio materials are wood (the least expensive), brick, flagstone and concrete patio stones. Flagstone, which is often difficult to find and which must be laid very carefully to avoid fracturing, remains popular because of its attractive appearance. Patio stones

are available in round, square and rectangular shapes and are the most economical choice, next to wood, at an average cost of \$4.75 for a 20-by-20-inch stone. Brick looks warm and stable and is easy to work with. By laying it in decorative patterns, you can create interesting effects. It will cost a minimum of \$600 for materials (including approximately 1,000 bricks) for a 10-by-20-foot brick patio.

Your patio will probably require a sand or gravel base. Be sure to slope it slightly so that surface water will run away from your house. If you select flagstone, look for the hardest grade available. If you choose brick, buy solid paving brick rather than cored or "faced" brick, which is used in vertical construction.

Contact your municipal building inspection office before you begin. A talk with your building inspector will ensure that you are following regulations and that your proposed construction will be safe and soundly planned. Whether you will need a building permit depends on where you live. In Halifax, for example, any construction valued at more than \$200 requires a permit. Residents of St. John's and many other municipalities must have a permit for any construction at all. It may take as long as three weeks to have a permit approved in Halifax. In Moncton it takes three days most of the year, and a week to 10 days in late spring and early summer. Most Maritime municipalities subscribe to the 1980 edition of the National Building Code, which provides a comprehensive list of safety standards. A handrail of at least 42 inches, for example, must be installed on any raised platform where the distance from the ground exceeds 24 inches. The details you will have to submit to your building inspector will vary according to

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where you live. But you will probably have to include the over-all size of your property, locations of existing buildings, distance from property lines, a detailed sketch and the estimated cost of your proposed construction. In some areas the board of health may require information on the distance of your project from a septic tank or field.

A visit to your bookshop or public library will help you get started. It is wise to start, as Allistair and Lorraine MacLeod did, by poring over home and decorating magazines for ideas that appeal. You can then move on to specialized publications that provide plans for specific projects and step-by-step instructions. The Canadian Workshop, published in Don Mills, Ont., is a good publication to look for. And the How To Do It indexes at your public library list, by subject, all kinds of do-it-yourself projects. For example, 16 Outdoor Brick Projects You Can Build is available from L.E. Shaw and other masonry dealers. Published by the Brick Institute of America, it includes a plan for a mortarless brick barbecue that you can build in a couple of hours for less than \$100.

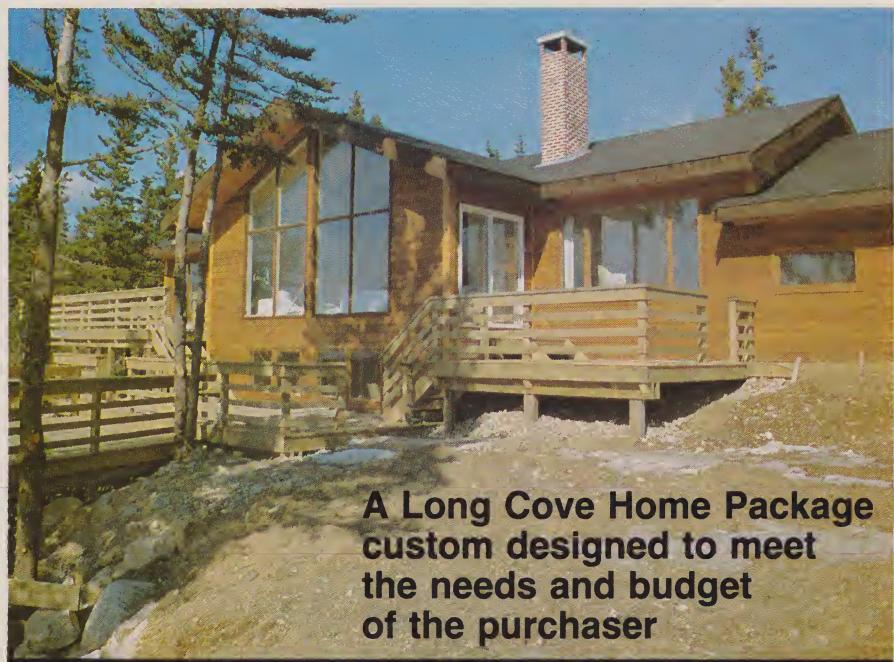
Ask yourself several questions before selecting your plan. Should the backyard structure be self-supporting or should it be attached to the house? Do you want a trellis roof or a horizontal railing for visual privacy? Can you build the deck high enough above ground level to double as a carport? Will you plan for morning or afternoon sun? Will you be entertaining small groups or will you want a more formal space for a large number of people? Will the plan complement the style of the house? Can you build in an area where there is little air movement (you can judge this by recalling where leaves tend to collect in the fall) or will you need a windbreaker of some sort? Will you incorporate a mature tree into the deck or patio by leaving space around the trunk? Do you need information on transplanting smaller trees and shrubs?

Give careful consideration to the size of your patio or deck. Decks and Patios, an instruction book published in 1980 by Creative Homeowner Press, recommends 20 square feet per person, or a total of 20 by 25 feet if you'll be entertaining 15 to 25 people at a time. If you are limited by your budget or size of yard, however, you can use built-in seating or a careful arrangement of furniture to provide a spacious feeling in a smaller area.

A final consideration will be the addition of flower boxes, ornamental or reflecting pools, outdoor fireplaces, walkways, hanging planters. And take the appearance of your entire yard into account. "Stick to a general theme and follow it," suggests Bruce Warren of Grassroots Landscaping Services. "The joy of a backyard renovation is that you don't have to rush it or to be able to afford it all right now. It's like a jigsaw puzzle. You can enjoy it and add to it over the years."

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Newcomers who drive into most communities in the Atlantic region sometimes get a surprise: Instead of the white or light-colored houses that dominate Ontario and New England or the muted stuccos of the west, there's an explosion of reds, royal blues and greens. Sprinkled among the brightly painted homes there's a puff of pastels: Baby blues, pinks, yellows. Many of them are covered with synthetic siding—vinyl, steel, aluminum or hardboard.

Obviously, easterners like color, but many dislike painting. As a result, siding, especially vinyl, has become a hot item. The Halifax-Dartmouth phone book, for example, lists more than 25 siding contractors. Richard Fraser of Riviera, a siding company in Halifax, calls vinyl siding "the thing of the future."

But not everyone's a siding fan. Some say that paint, especially some of the new kinds, looks better, costs less and lasts nearly as long.

For the consumer, faced with a dizzying array of paints and siding—all promising to make a house look as if it belongs in *Better Homes and Gardens*—deciding what covering to use is a confusing business.

Before you decide do some research. From the regional office of National Research Council of Canada (1411 Oxford Street, Halifax), you can order selections from a publication called *Canadian Building Digest*.

These offer consumers information on such topics as "Paints and Other Coatings," "Paint—What is it?" "New Organic Coatings." You might also check with an architect. A one-hour consultation may cost \$65, but if you're planning to spend \$5,000 for siding, it could be a wise investment. Some experts say siding isn't suitable for all houses—and it costs about two or three times as much as paint.

Although today's textured vinyl and aluminum siding looks more like the wood it's covering than it used to, it still can't duplicate the look of wood. Therefore, if siding is installed on a wood building, "it changes what the building looks like," says Allen Penney, a professor of architecture at the Technical University of Nova Scotia in Halifax. And owners of old, ornately trimmed wood homes may find there's still a "tremendous amount of painting," to be done, Penney says.

Some siding will fade and even require

painting. But siding Richard Fraser insists that solid-colored vinyl siding is "maintenance free." Both aluminum and steel siding scratch and dent easily. Some advice: Don't lean a bicycle or ladder against an aluminum-sided house. If neighborhood kids play hard ball near your aluminum or steel-sided house, "you could be in trouble," warns Art Irwin of the Nova Scotia Mines and Energy Department. Because such siding interlocks it may not be possible simply to replace the battered panel. Vinyl siding is more durable but in cold weather it can become brittle, then crack or shatter.

Perhaps the most important thing to consider is that siding should be put on for cosmetic effect, Irwin says, rather than as insulation. He estimates the advantages of siding are "85% cosmetic, 15% energy saving." Claims by siding contractors that siding will chop 40% from the

on workmanship. But a consumer's best guarantee is the siding contractor's work record. When you've settled on a contractor, ask to see other houses he's sided. Check that the siding meets door casings, and run your hands over the siding. They shouldn't get chalky.

Before you even start to side or paint, consider why you're doing it. If it's to cover peeling or blistering paint or water stains on shingles, you could be covering a moisture problem that won't dry up and go away. In an older uninsulated home that probably doesn't have a vapor barrier to dissipate moisture from cooking, dishwashing, showers and baths, the moisture normally evaporates through the inside and outside walls. Covering it with siding or an oil-based paint could trap the moisture behind the shingles and rot the wood. In that case, paint won't stay on for long. Penney cites the example of a Halifax house, oil-painted dark green, that had no vapor barrier. On a hot day, water trapped under the impenetrable oil paint got very hot; six months after the paint job, the paint was blistered.

KELIH MACINNIES

Many homeowners today choose stains to cover the exterior. Because stains are porous, moisture flows through and the grain of the wood shows through. Unlike paints, stains don't chip, crack or peel, and they cost slightly less than paints. Sound good? There's a catch. Ron Traer of Glidden

Company in Halifax recommends that homeowners paint every five to seven years and stain every two to four years.

And not all homes can be stained. Architect Allen Penney says stains are unsuitable for older homes. If your house is covered with an oil-based paint, you're usually locked into using oil paint the next time. Some labels on cans of stain say the product is not intended for pre-painted surfaces. But when the magazine *Consumer Reports* tested stains, it found they adhered "remarkably well" to lightly chalked latex-painted surfaces. However, it recommended against using "any stain over glossy unweathered paint for fear of adhesion problems."

Penney's advice on choosing paint is: "Buy the cheapest you can get." These tend to be the porous, water-based paints. In both painting and siding, Penney says, "the whole problem is breathing."

— Roma Senn

To paint or not to paint...

Can't decide whether to paint, stain or install siding on the outside of your house? Here are some tips to help you out



consumer's fuel bill are "impossible," Irwin says. During the installation of siding, workmen sandwich $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches of rigid Styrofoam insulation between the old wood shingles and the new siding. The insulation has an R4 or R5 value ("R" value is a measurement of the insulation's resistance to heat transfer; the higher the resistance value, the less heat escapes through the insulating material), compared with an R12 to R14 value for regular wall insulation. Adding more inches of insulation would change the proportions of the house drastically and cause problems around windows and doors.

The trick to getting a good siding job is proper installation, Irwin says. If you look at some sided homes, you'll notice that the siding buckles because it has been put on too tightly. Some siding contractors offer 40-year guarantees on the materials and sometimes a guarantee



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Good landscaping means easier maintenance

THE ART OF LANDSCAPING

Whether you plan to hire a landscaper or tackle the backyard yourself, following these steps should make the job go more smoothly

By Jill Cooper Robinson

Is this the year to finally "do something" about your property, either by yourself or by hiring a professional landscaper?

Before you begin, be aware that even minor amounts of landscaping can cost surprisingly large amounts of money. Five years ago, the cost of basic labor for a 70-by-150-foot backyard (including lifting asphalt, laying eight inches of fill and topsoil, marking out beds, laying some sod and planting just three trees) was estimated at between \$8,000 and \$11,000. I did it myself for \$1,100. The problem is that landscapers can charge as much or as little as they like.

You'll need to get all kinds of estimates and make plans. That means finding out not just the price of a pear tree and one ton of top soil, but how long it takes to spread a ton of top soil, how many plants it will take to fill a six-foot-wide round bed. If you're designing changes yourself, draft them out—how the yard will look

this year and how you might expect it to look five or 10 years from now. This will save having to replant shrubs and trees planted too close together and give you some heart when the chestnut you dream of for shade goes in as a pencil-thin sapling.

Next, accept the fact you can't finish the job the first year. Even if you can afford to pay for both design and labor, and have the whole property ripped up and replanted by the middle of May, it's still not going to be the finished product. Plants are not static. And no one can safely plant full-grown trees. Consequently, the scale of things will change radically over the years. This year, the new steps show; in 10 years they'll be covered in cascading alyssum. This year, the birches are toothpicks; in 10 years, they'll be leaning this way and that in the most picturesque fashion. Allow for the fact that your tastes will change. You may

come to love the spring color of the golden chamaecyparis more than all the cut flowers in the world. Leave room in any plan for future changes.

Learn about our own soil and climate conditions. It is merely throwing good money away to hire someone to plant hundreds of dollars' worth of plants that may not be suitable to the region. We have one of the best growing climates in the world in the Atlantic provinces. We suffer no real extremes of weather and sit on good, rich, peatish soil. They're just the sort of conditions dozens of highly ornamental and long-blooming plants prefer. Leave the exotic or risky plants to the experienced, the fanatics or the professionals.

Consider what you already have: Your house has a certain shape and age and sits at a certain angle. Your property enjoys (or not) exposures in certain directions. You may have some full-grown plants, or

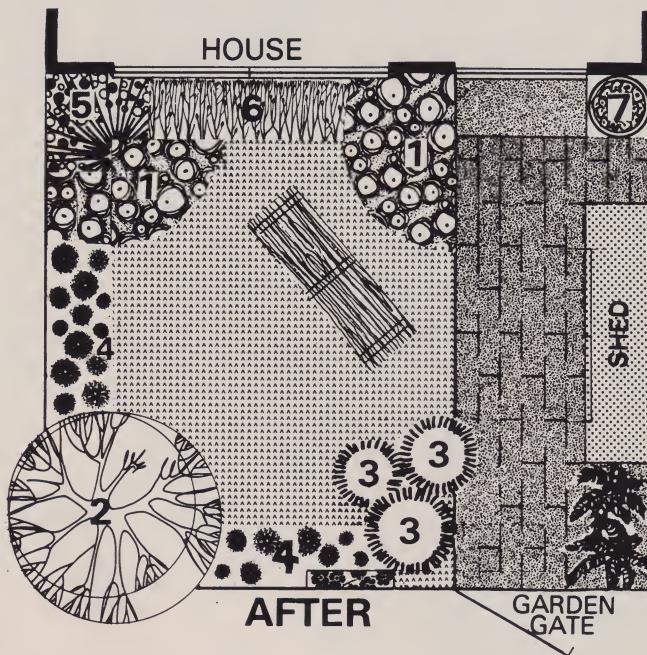
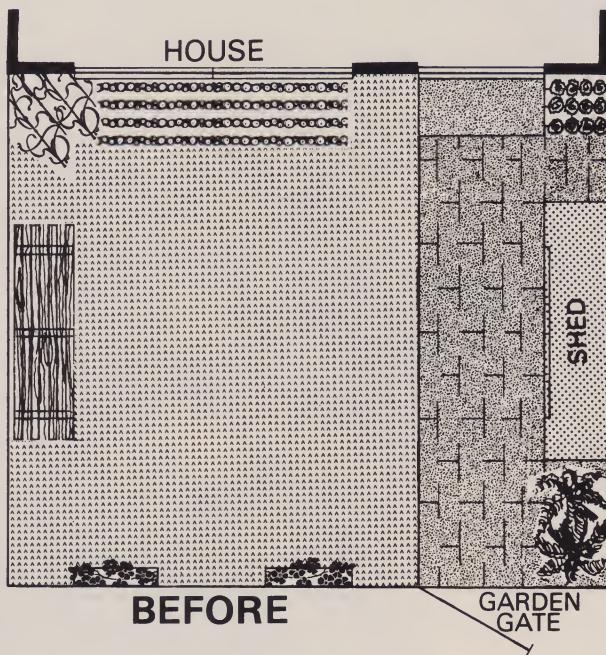


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Landscaping



These are "before" and "after" sketches of a tiny fenced garden, about 12 feet by 14 feet. The owner wanted to continue growing vegetables (1), but also wanted some formality and more flowers. She was advised to plant all corners and widen beds. Side beds are 18 inches wide, which leaves a centre lawn size of eight feet by nine feet, enough for lawn chairs. The bench, which had been against

a wall, now is used as a table. A small, flowering tree—a dwarf crab—was planted in one corner (2). A cluster of small azaleas was planted at (3), and along two walls (4) perennials were planted. The vegetables remain against the patio window, but clematis (5) and scarlet runners (6) were added. The lettuce, formerly by the door, (7) has been replaced with a cement tub of geraniums.

you may even have too many. Your property may be perched on top of a windy bluff or spread out along a rocky incline. Don't fight these situations. At worst you'll lose bitterly and expensively. At best you'll make a truce with them for small pockets of change—two lines of hedges as a defence against the wind, a few dips and hollows carved from a granite hillside for some long-stemmed perennials.

Decide whether to go for a formal or informal landscaping style. Formal styles mean straight lines (and straight paths) and geometrically shaped beds of a single kind of flower. That's the kind of garden found on the grounds of French palaces. The informal style is characterized by the huge parks of 18th-century England—wandering streams, temple ruins on distant knolls. Usually neither style is strictly appropriate today, but some notable compromises have evolved. The Japanese have come up with disciplined informality; English cottage gardening has given us formal chaos. Both are suitable for small areas. What style you should have depends greatly on the architecture of your house and the size and shape of your property. A large tract of land and a formal house demand certain treatment; a Forties bungalow with a small yard requires a different approach.

Consider what you want from your

landscaping. Is it a fabulous view from the living room window, a place for the kids to play without crushing the grapes on the vine, a place to barbecue? If you don't plan for your priorities now, they'll establish themselves arbitrarily. The clever thing is to integrate them initially to highlight or hide them, thereby encouraging the best and most attractive use of your land. Having to "stick in" the barbecue pit when all else is done is costly and the surest route to visual anguish I know.

Hand in hand with style and priorities is flow—visual and actual. How will you and your eye move, both on the ground and through the scene? After your various lists, the paths are the first lines you put down on paper for your design. Keep the movement logical. No point in putting a nice central path from front door to sidewalk if most footsteps reach your front door from somewhere in a side driveway. And no point in drawing a fetchingly curvy path from back door to barbecue, when human nature dictates that a person with a heavily loaded tray will take the shortest path to the hot dogs. Whether you construct actual pathways from brick or flagging or simply indicate paths by the placement of vegetation beside them, make them simple. Paths should start for a reason, curve or go around corners for a reason, and

return or stop for a reason. It's nice, by the way, when anything but a central path keeps going. Try and finish a circle.

The next step is any construction that may be required: Steps up an ungainly slope, retaining walls or rock gardens, raised beds to separate soil or give interest to a flat stretch, wells around trees when you must raise or level the land around them, holes for ponds. This is the point in your planning when you get down to the engineering involved. Plan the prospects on paper first, and reckon on accomplishing only one, possibly two, major ones a year. If attempting them yourself, read some reference books. Reader's Digest Association (Canada) Ltd.'s *Practical Guide to Home Landscaping* and James U. Crockett's *Landscape Gardening* are particularly useful. More important, talk to someone who has already tackled the problems. Spring is ideal construction weather. With luck, you can then enjoy the fruits of your labor during the summer months. The next best time is fall, when it is cool again and shrinking vegetation makes for better visibility.

The next step requires imagination, courage and discipline. These are the qualities that come into play when you decide what "effects" you will incorporate in your landscaping design. Fewer are inevitably better than many. And a few,

done really big in a simple way, is the best solution of all. For instance, one good-sized, crammed-full perennial bed is much better than three or four thinly planted pockets of perennials spotting a lawn here and there. One big, magnificent or ornamental tree, framed with plenty of open air, is more effective than a weeping birch here, a mountain ash there, then a hawthorne and over there a blue spruce. The eye can't decide what to focus on. Be definitive. If you want the eye to notice something, tell us so.

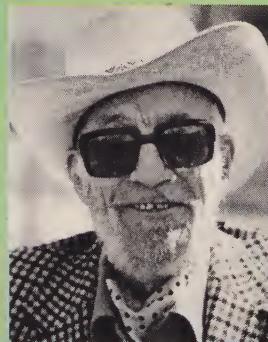
When planting, keep in mind the classic rules of picture composition: Scale, balance, texture, distance, color. How do you know when you've got all these and other elements right? Practise. Draft it all out, in colored pencil, to scale. If you want both a Japanese maple and a rose of Sharon, draw them in in full fall colors before planting them. Lilacs and wisteria could produce a very boring corner side by side. Is all this too much trouble? Not nearly as much trouble as getting it wrong when you plant.

Try to plant for seasonal interest. Don't fork out vast sums of money for a mass of annuals that will all come into bloom in July and August while you're away on vacation. What about trees that bloom in the spring or have glorious foliage in the fall or look great against the snow in winter? You pay for trees only once. What about shrubs that get big fast, make magnificent displays in season and are terrific background green for other plants when their own bloom is over? You pay for shrubs only once. What about perennials that go on year after year and ask only to be divided every three or four years? Annuals have their place; they fill in the bare spots and come into their own in late summer and fall. But they're expensive (unless you have the room and light to grow them from seed), and they're a lot of work (for which landscaping companies are thankful). Over this last generation, homeowners seem to have forgotten there is anything else to put in a garden.

All that's left is maintenance—water, feed and weed. Why is more fuss made of maintenance than planning? A well-planned garden or perfect landscaping won't eliminate all maintenance. But good landscaping does mean easier maintenance. Mulches (ingredients according to plant preferences but usually kitchen compost, leaves, pine needles or the like) are nutritious to plants and help keep down weeds. Feeding plants well and regularly (once a year is usually enough) encourages plants to grow healthy enough to fight pests and diseases. Water once or twice during dry spells—deeply and thoroughly so that you reach all the roots.

And that's all there is to getting started on a richly rewarding exercise, improving your property's value, or simply arming yourself with knowledge enough not to get taken by people you hire to do the job. ■

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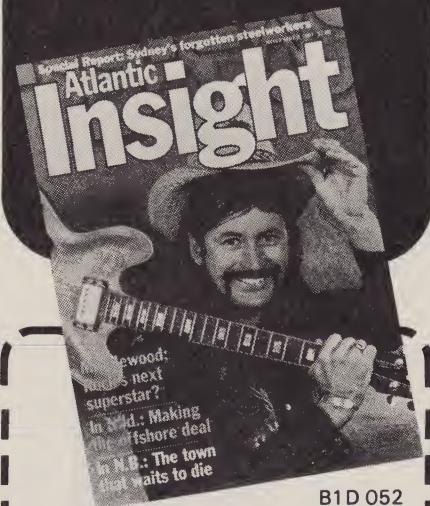
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Atlantic HOMES

Laying down the law: A homeowner's guide

What are your access rights to the sun?
Who's to blame if a guest breaks a leg on your patio?
It pays to know your rights—and responsibilities

When a Halifax homeowner recently decided to put up a fence on his property, he got the required permit, and a city official told him that as long as the fence was on his side of the boundary line, he didn't need to consult his neighbor. But the neighbors complained, and an official fence-viewer ruled that the fence was "incompatible" with the others in the neighborhood. A judge later ordered him to modify the fence, stating, "I believe property owners should have the greatest freedom but, when they choose to live in an urban area, ownership rights have to be compromised at times so they do not infringe on the rights of others." Many homeowners assume they have rights they may not actually possess.

To begin with, no individual completely owns the land on which his house sits. The Crown owns the land, and the homeowner is a tenant of the Crown. What the Crown gives the Crown can take away, and this fact is the basis of expropriation legislation. Many homeowners regard expropriation as something that happens in rural areas—Parks Canada seeking land for a national park, or provincial highways departments gobbling up land for roads. But municipalities have the right to appropriate land for any public purpose that falls within their jurisdiction—widening sidewalks, building access roads to new subdivisions, expanding the facilities of fire and police stations.

Heritage legislation can limit your rights. If your home has been designated a heritage property, any alterations you make to the exterior of your house

must conform to the standards set by local legislation or bylaw.

What rights of access to the sun do owners of solar collectors or passive solar houses have? Susan Holtz of the Ecology Action Centre in Halifax, whose study *Legal Aspects of Solar Access Legislation in Nova Scotia* was published last month, concludes that under existing conditions, "the homeowner has very few rights indeed." For those contemplating the installation of solar heating, her book outlines a method for calculating how high a house or tree would have to be before it started posing a problem. "If there's a possibility a building of this height could go in," Holtz advises, "your best bet is a negotiated settlement with your neighbor." Under such a settlement (sometimes called a skyspace agreement), you would be buying the promise from your neighbor that he would not build or plant in such a way as to obstruct the passage of sunlight flowing across his land to yours. Obviously, such an agreement would have to be drawn up by a lawyer.

In case you are beginning to wonder if homeowners have any rights, let's look at nuisance. Nuisance is a tort (a non-contractual civil wrong) which protects you, in the enjoyment of your property, from someone else's unreasonable use of his property. What constitutes unreasonable will depend on the circumstances and is best left to a lawyer to define, but nuisances include excessive noise, vibration, noxious odors. Many areas of nuisance are controlled by zoning bylaws or city ordinances. But if





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Laying down the law

your neighbor makes home brew in his basement in such a way as to subject you to fermenting mash fumes, you probably have the right to bring a civil action against him.

As a homeowner you have responsibilities as well as rights, and the most obvious are those under liability law. All homeowner insurance policies cover you for claims made against you for accidental physical injury to others or damage to their property. Walter Baggs, claims supervisor for Royal Insurance in Halifax, says such insurance doesn't make people careless. "Generally people do not like to be at fault," he points out, but adds, "there are so many things that can happen." He recalls a case of a few years back, where at a party given in Halifax, about 15 guests milled out onto the deck. It collapsed, sending them down a good 10 feet and causing a number of injuries. In subsequent claims, the homeowner was found negligent. The deck had been in need of repair, and these repairs had not been done. Not all claims against homeowners are upheld by the courts, as in the case of a woman who tripped over a concrete slab raised

one inch above the others in a patio area. The judge, in dismissing the action, ruled that "the defendant owed a duty of care to the plaintiff only if the irregular stone constituted an unusual danger. Such an irregularity in a private family residence is one that normally may be expected."

It's better to anticipate problems than

fenced—and the fence maintained in a good state of repair. The same care should be extended to verandas, steps, freestanding walls. If you have children, make sure their swings and slides are properly installed and the front walk is not littered with roller skates and skateboards. In fact, keep all clutter to a minimum; garden hoses and rakes are notorious for causing injury, and to claim they were in full view is to beg the question. And if you've moved from an area where the city cleans the sidewalks in winter, don't expect the same service everywhere else. In Halifax, for example, it's your responsibility to remove snow and ice from your sidewalk.

In your role of homeowner and neighbor, rights and responsibilities merge into the old saw, Do as you would be done by. Here are a few areas where problems can arise.

Boundary lines and fences:

Prevention is better than cure, so when the title is searched before you buy your home, have a survey done to accurately establish the boundary lines. Not knowing exactly where your property ends and your neighbor's begins can lead to a number of problems. For example, if

"If you give a garden party with music for dancing, and don't invite the surrounding neighbors, expect at least one visit from the police"

to pay for them. Take special care if you have a swimming pool or well on your property. The law takes a dim view of people who rely for safety on warnings to neighbors to keep their kids away. Ensure that the well is covered and the pool



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you plan to add on to your house, build a garage or put in a deck, you may find that you do not actually own all the space you are planning to cover.

The homeowner who wants to put up a fence would do well to take a lesson from the homeowner whose case opened this article. His lawyer concedes that, maybe, if he had built his fence three or four feet inside his property line instead on only one foot, his neighbors might not have complained. It is obviously much better, whatever your rights may be in the matter, to consult with adjoining neighbors about any fence you are planning to erect. Neighbors usually share maintenance of an existing fence, unless the title deeds specify ownership. If you have a formal agreement specifying shared maintenance, and your neighbor refuses to help defray the costs of replacing a rotting fence, even after you obtained estimates and submitted them to him, you're entitled to go ahead and send him his share of the bill.

Trees: Laws across the region vary, but in most communities if the elms on your property develop Dutch elm disease and you don't cut them down yourself, city authorities have a right to do so and send you the bill. They also have the right to cut out the roots of your tree if they interfere with sewer or water lines. Tree roots can also cause problems for your neighbor, so if you're planning to put in a willow, don't plant it near your lot line.

Trees provide shade, sometimes in places where it is not appreciated. As long as your tree poses no potential danger to your neighbor (if you have any doubts have a tree expert look at it), he can't force you to cut it down just because he doesn't like the shade. If it is that big, it was probably there when he bought his house. He can trim off the branches that hang into his yard, but not to the extent that he injures or kills your tree. Even if portions of your fruit tree hang over the fence, you have rights to all the fruit. It's probably an exercise in futility to enforce your rights. In fact, officially allowing your neighbor to help himself to some of the fruit might stifle any complaints about leaves that need sweeping in the fall.

Shortcuts: What happens if your neighbors' kids take shortcuts across your property to get to the ballpark? You can fence, complain or decide to live with it and put in a path to discourage side trips into flower beds. Putting in a path may imply you are giving permission to use this as a shortcut, so check with your lawyer first about this. And be sure that you actually have access to all portions of your own land without, unwittingly, trespassing on your neighbor's property. I found out about this the hard way.

Because my husband and I don't drive, we were not concerned about the lack of parking facilities for the house we bought in Halifax. But when we put the

house up for sale a few years later, the lack of a driveway turned into a big disadvantage. No problem, we decided. The back garden was large, and there was a lane behind it. We could take down part of the fence and provide a parking space in the garden, couldn't we? We couldn't. We discovered that the lane outside the back fence belonged to our next-door neighbor, who declined to grant or sell us an easement across his property to our garden.

Ball-playing: One common cause of annoyance between neighbors is the basketball or football that lands in flower beds, damaging the dahlias, or falls into the middle of the picnic table. If you're going to set up a basket for the budding Wilt Chamberlain in your family, install it so that when he overshoots, the ball lands somewhere on your property.

Noise: Most towns and cities have noise bylaws that cover public noise between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. This protects homeowners from the kind of noise that disturbs a whole street, such as amplified acid rock continually blaring from an open window. If you give a garden party with music for dancing, and don't invite the surrounding neighbors, expect at least one visit from the police. There's no point in snarling at them; they have to act on a complaint. A warning is usually all it amounts to, unless you throw this kind of party repeatedly.

— Pat Lotz

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LITERATURE

Canada catches up with David Richards—at last

With his fourth book, this young New Brunswick writer is gaining the national recognition he deserves

By Harry Thurston

I picked up the book with the tavern scene on the cover and read the dust jacket blurb that hailed it as the best first novel since Ernest Buckler's *The Mountain and the Valley*. It seemed blasphemous: For me, a farmboy, Buckler's classic was the only spiritual record of what it was like for a sensitive youth to come of age in the Maritimes—until I read *The Coming of Winter* by David Adams Richards. It was 1974. Here was an authentic voice of my generation: Disillusioned and dissolute, far removed from the cultural security of family and farmland. Times had changed and values with them. Richards' first novel opens with a lad deliberately shooting a cow instead of the deer that he was hunting. And he doesn't understand why.

Eight years later, it seems the rest of Canada is catching up with Richards at last. His latest novel, and fourth book, *Lives of Short Duration* drew raves from critics who'd previously ignored him and is a strong contender for this year's Governor General's Award for fiction. His reputation, once concentrated mostly in literary journals, is moving onto a broader stage.

Richards was only 22 when he wrote *The Coming of Winter*, between midnight and dawn, sometimes at the frantic rate of several thousand words a night. It was a stunning débüt, but Richards quickly laid to rest any question about his being a one-novel wonder. While still a third-year English student at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, he finished a second big novel, *Blood Ties*. Critic Fred Cogswell says that it "radiates more understanding and empathy for the human condition than almost any other Canadian novel." The author was not yet 25.

Writing *Blood Ties* was fateful for Richards. He abandoned any notion of having things both ways, a doctorate in literature and a nice house with wall-to-wall books and a career as a novelist—"Maybe some people can but I couldn't," he says now without regret. Richards dropped out, three credits short of a BA, and got

down to the business of full-time writing.

The result was a third book, this time a collection of short stories, *Dancers at Night*, released in 1978 by his Ottawa publisher, Oberon Press. Most readers considered it less successful than his two novels (an opinion Richards shares), but his reputation kept growing. In a national survey conducted by *Books in Canada* in 1979, several writers and critics singled out Richards as the most underrated writer in the country—not much consolation for a man whose first novel had been published in a 250,000-copy Russian edition.

I had met David Richards a few times, writers crossing paths at functions, sharing an anecdote in the best-stocked hotel room afterward. So last November when I was in his home town of Newcastle, N.B., I dropped by. It was bad timing. Richards' new novel, *Lives of Short Duration*, was due out that month and he was suffering pre-publication jitters. Three years' work was at stake. I was sympathetic and our conversation turned to Canadian critics—especially central Canadian critics.

"There's just no two ways about it. They overlook me, they overlook Ray Fraser, they overlook us all," Richards said. "They just don't know where the country begins and where it ends."

But we were wrong—this time anyway.

"A major writer, a voice to be reckoned with," boomed *Globe and Mail* critic William French. Governor General's Award-winning poet Patrick Lane, reviewing *Lives in the Edmonton Journal*, put the literary community on notice: "If this book doesn't win the Governor-General's Award for fiction this year [to be announced in May], then we're all in trouble. It is magnificent."

Richards is a regional novelist, but so was William Faulkner to whom he has often been compared. As Faulkner's characters lived on the banks of the Mississippi, Richards' people, his real-life family and his fictional characters (which he speaks of as flesh and blood), make their home in the Miramichi River country of northeastern New Brunswick.

Except for three sunny seasons in Spain and a dreary year in Victoria, Richards has lived in Newcastle, where he was born in 1950, the third of six children. He and his wife, Peggy, a McIntyre from nearby Bartibog Bridge, met in high school and married in 1971 while still students in college. Today, they live only one street from where David grew up and his father, the owner of the local drive-in theatre, still resides. "Sometimes I feel like a 17th-century peasant in the Ruhr Valley of Germany," Richards says. "'Born, lived and buried under the shadow of the same church spire.'"

Like many small-town writers before him, Richards has sometimes run afoul of home-town people who see in the incidents in his fiction—especially the less flattering ones—something uncomfortably close to real life. Richards balks at the literal interpretation, even points out that he has only used the word "Miramichi" in one story; otherwise it

has been simply "the River." "When I talk about the River," he says, "I'm speaking in a broader sense of the whole country."

There is in Richards' mind, however, an imaginary map which conforms roughly to the geography of the Miramichi. In this world, you are either from upriver or downriver. We drove downriver to explore the settings of Richards' first two novels. (*Lives* takes place upriver.) On the outskirts of Newcastle, you pass through one of the little Americas which are the appendages of small towns everywhere: Malls, hamburger and fried chicken joints. In *Lives*, Richards attacks this alien culture that consumes the heritage and dominates the everyday lives of his characters—and neighbors.



Richards is often compared to Faulkner

"It's the absolute insidious violence of soap operas and commercials and McDonald's that terrifies me. It's that type of thing that most people are powerless against, and it's that type of thing I'd like to give a voice to," he says. He pauses. "The problem is, it's like living in a cauldron, and you want to step outside and tell somebody."

We travel on in silence until he gestures for me to slow down and points out the squat grey stone cottage that he imagines was Kevin Dulse's home in *The Coming of Winter*. Richards is proud of the fact that the house survived the great Miramichi fire of 1825. I suggest that it could still be there after the shopping malls and fast food outlets are gone. So could his own fiction.

It's appropriate that *Lives of Short Duration* should carry Richards to national literary prominence. It is his most ambitious work, in style and theme: One hundred years in the memories of the men and women on the River. The epic scale has echoes of the novelists he considers his masters, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.

The family has always been the centrepiece of Richards' fiction. *Lives* chronicles the tragic fate of three generations of the Terri family. There's Old Simon, the patriarch, 60 years a lumberman and salmon guide on the river, who escapes his hospital bed to die as he lived, with dignity in the woods; his bootlegger son, George, who wallows in his failed entrepreneurship, and the offspring of George's marriage to a manipulating, promiscuous woman who abandons her family. It is this youngest Terri generation that the book concentrates on: Lois, who has almost nothing going for her but love for her three bastard children; Little Simon, a mock-tough drug dealer who commits suicide at a game of Russian roulette; and Packet, an articulate, transient laborer who is trying to come to grips with his own violent tendencies. It's a bleak vision but one made bearable by Richards' overriding compassion for his characters.

Richards is preoccupied with mental and physical violence. For him, individual violence begs a larger social question—in *Lives*, "the manipulation of a whole people." In Packet, he gives us a magnificent portrait of a homeless individual: The child abandoned by his mother and the man forgotten by his country. Packet represents "the hundreds, the thousands of men gone from the Maritimes to work and to build the rest of the country and then to come home—a land bought and played with by foreigners, in a country that he didn't know."

Richards says, "I'm writing about characters who, in other ways, don't have a voice about their situation—certainly politics doesn't do any good. If I do little else, I'm trying to give them some sort of voice."

Perhaps there are too many voices in *Lives*, as Richards admits. He has created what he calls "a kind of chorus," which can sometimes be music and other times cacophony. Yet Richards' sinuous stream-of-consciousness style does flow—like the River. "The most natural writer I've come across," University of New Brunswick creative writing teacher Nancy Bauer says.

We are driving back upriver, near where Peggy Richards was born. We turn down a dirt lane, pass under the massive limbs of ancient white pines, rare today but once the staple of the legendary log drives on the Miramichi, and come to a stop in a churchyard at the riverside. It is the setting for the opening

scene for *Blood Ties*. "This is where I was married," Richard says, "and I hope to be buried here."

The fictional town on the River is becoming as familiar to his readers as some places they've actually lived. In ways all of us recognize and for which, Richards points out, we are responsible, it is a sad place: Economically depressed, culturally colonized and burdened with local bigotry.

But there is also a heroic quality to the characters (inherent to river people, Richards thinks), the quality found in Old Simon, whom Richards describes as having "a dark genius that ran in his blood"—something that could be said of Richards himself.



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AGRICULTURE

Saving the little busy bee

Mark Goguen is worried about his strawberries, Danny Laird fears for his honey. Other Maritimers, if they knew what these two know, would be worried too. A tiny reddish-brown bug—the varroa mite—is threatening the world's honeybees and though Canada hasn't been infested, the attempt to keep the bug out of the country could pose a real problem for

Maritime apiarists and agriculturalists.

The mite, which deforms or kills honeybees, turned up in Indonesia in 1904 and quickly spread into six countries, including Russia, Japan and China, by 1960. By 1970, 15 nations reported infestations and by 1978, 32 nations.

Canada is one of only six major honey-producing nations that has not been infested. "Canada hasn't been in-

fested yet, and maybe never will be," says Moncton, N.B., beekeeper Danny Laird, "but what really worries us is that the government will likely very soon close off the borders to imported bees. They aren't going to take any chances on letting infested hives into this country."

Closing the borders to imported bees would be devastating to Maritime honey producers: Almost all of them in P.E.I. and New Brunswick and most in Nova Scotia depend on the import of packaged and queen bees from the United States.

"This year, if they cut everything right off, we'd be crippled," Laird says. Unfortunately, colonies infested with the varroa mite usually do not show visible damage for two to six years after they have been entered. Many U.S. beekeepers raise bees for sale rather than honey and chances are high that a beekeeper may unknowingly ship infested colonies to other areas.

Nova Scotia, with about 65% of its 650 beekeepers dependent on imported packaged bees, spent about \$100,000 in 1981 on them. Few Maritime beekeepers keep their bees over the winter. "It's been a question of economics," says Lorne Crozier, N.S. provincial apiarist. "In the past it's been cheaper to start with new packages each spring, than to overwinter, but we have to start becoming self-sufficient in bees." To that end, beekeepers' associations in the Maritimes have been encouraging their members to consider turning over part of their hives to the production of bees this spring.

The loss of honey production would have serious economic consequences for producers in the region. But a shortage of honeybees could also disrupt the process of pollinating crops. About 15% of the world's food production depends upon or benefits from insect pollination, and bees are the most important of the insect pollinators. "The strawberry flower is a very difficult flower to pollinate," says Moncton, N.B., strawberry producer Mark Goguen, "and the bee is the only insect that can do it successfully."

Goguen plans to increase the number of hives in his fields this year and to devote more of them to bee production. He says having bees in a strawberry field can increase the yield by about 60%. In Nova Scotia, beekeepers rent their hives out to blueberry growers, who also find the bee indispensable in pollinating crops. Bees also pollinate crops such as alfalfa, buckwheat and clover, important sources of feed for animals.

Scientists have not yet found a way to control the varroa mite, although research is under way at Cornell University. If they don't find some method of control and if Maritime beekeepers don't soon become self-sufficient in the production of bees, honey is only one of the many things we eat that may eventually become nothing more than a sweet memory.

— Susan Soucoup



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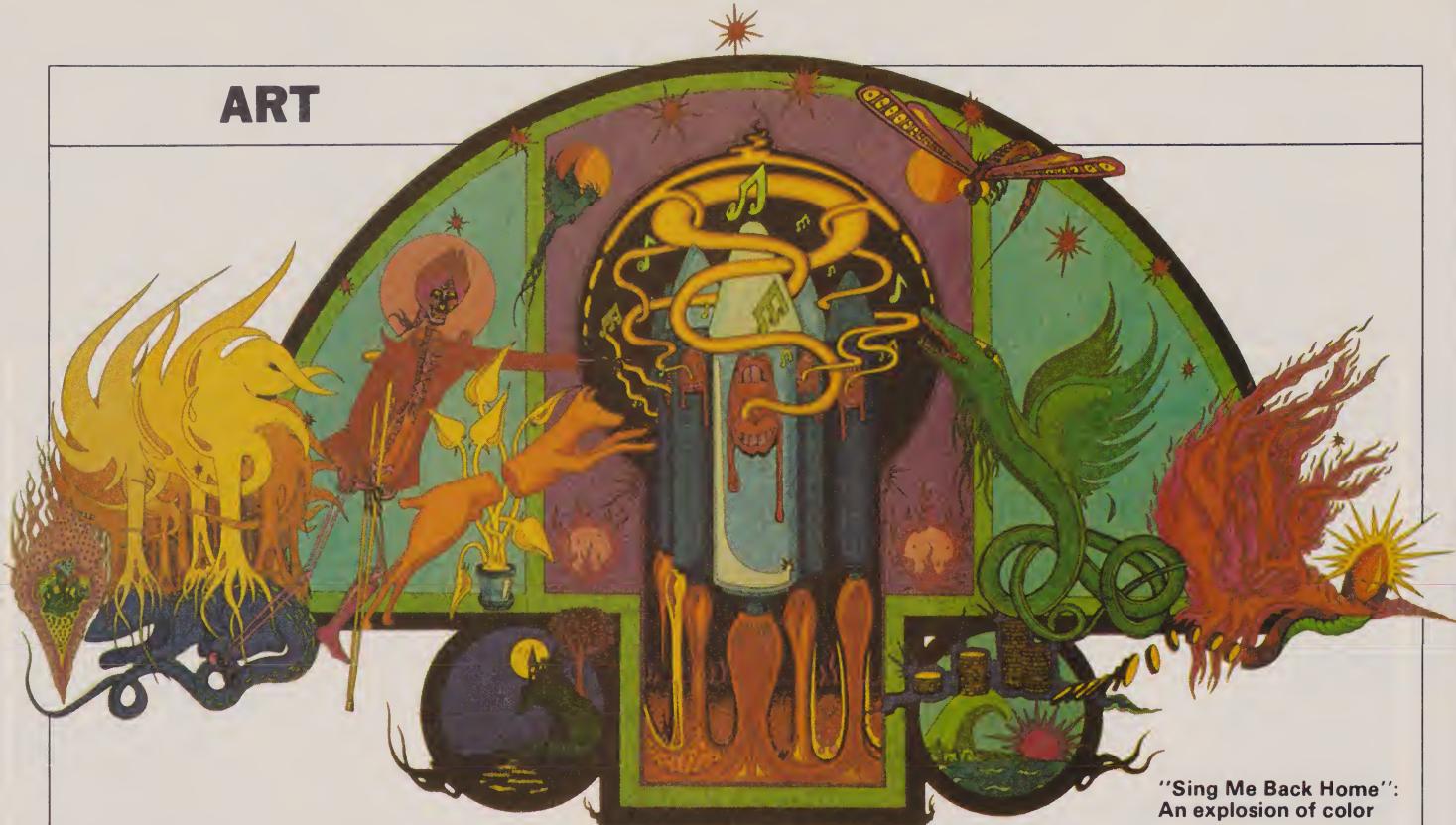
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"Sing Me Back Home":
An explosion of color

Strange images from a steeplejack

Till 1977, Lionel Senecal, steeplejack, waiter and artist, wouldn't show his work to anyone. Now, more people are discovering his complex, intricate illustrations

By Roma Senn

Sometimes Lionel Senecal lets weeks go by without going near the slanted drawing table in his living room. Then, when the mood strikes, he'll get out of bed in the morning, pick up his watercolor pens and sit at the table for 48 hours at a stretch, painstakingly turning out the vibrant and violent illustrations that are his trademark. "It's a killer," he says of these marathon sessions. "I enjoy it."

Senecal, 29, makes his living in Halifax in a variety of ways—from waiting on tables to working as a steeplejack—and he's diffident about calling himself an artist. That's what he's striving to become, he says. But recently, he's been working full-time at his drawing table. And when he shows up for an interview with slides of his work, looking sleepy and rumpled in faded jeans and a grey sweatshirt, he seems almost surprised at how good his complex illustrations look, projected on a wall. He's sold or given away most of the originals, and it's been a while since he's seen the slides blown up. "A lot of this is good," he says, mostly to himself. Then, aware that he's been overheard, he adds, "I hate to say that."

The illustrations have a comic-book quality, overpowering the viewer with an explosion of color and strangely juxtaposed images. In "Sing Me Back Home," a turbaned skeleton, a dog in two sec-

tions, a house that looks haunted and a mythical monster are all part of one illustration. In "Rep-Vac," one of Senecal's favorites, there's a toothy skeleton in running shoes. It represents beauty and horror, Senecal says. "You can't have one without the other." In another work, cat-like creatures run as lightning strikes; a train flanked by palm trees goes by in the background; ghoulish birds fly overhead near an archway.

Sometimes, Senecal says, even he doesn't know how the images fit together. He doesn't plan all his illustrations in advance, although they've become more calculated, more precise in the past few years: He's grown more interested in the technical side of his drawing, and he



Senecal is "more visual than verbal"

likes to pencil in his images before painting.

Some of his friends, Senecal says, suspect that he must have produced his mysterious images with the aid of drugs. "You don't do that when you're stoned," he says, pointing to an intricately detailed drawing. "You can't." He's happy to explain his illustrations, he says. "It's bullshit if you don't." But, answering questions about his work, he tends to drift from Joe Clark jokes to lines from songs by Leonard Cohen and David Bowie. "I tend to be more visual than verbal," he remarks. His response to a question about one of his drawings is as cryptic as his work: "Have you reached puberty?"

For Senecal, it's a step forward to even show his work to strangers. Until 1977, when he had his first exhibition, he rarely allowed anyone to see his illustrations. But he reached a point "where I was becoming less self-conscious," and he even took the initiative of asking a gallery—at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax—to show his work. The year after that exhibition, he took part in a two-person show at Halifax's Saint Mary's University. Robert Dietz, then curator at the Saint Mary's gallery, describes Senecal's work as "quite attractive to young people, and best understood by them." When Dietz opened Dresden Galleries in Halifax, he hung a couple of Senecal's illustrations there, but says his work is "difficult to sell."

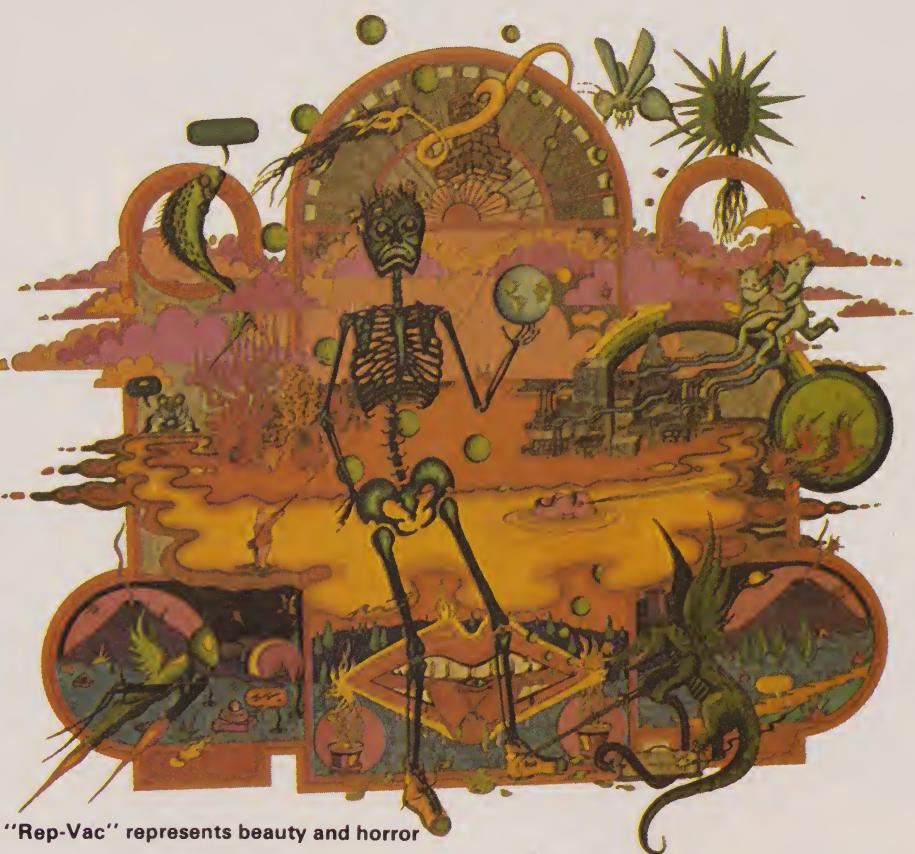
It's a problem that doesn't seem to concern Senecal much. He gives his

work freely to friends. "It's something to be enjoyed, something to be given," he says. This winter, however, he sold more illustrations in six weeks than he had in the past six years. He charges the same hourly rate that he earned as a laborer last summer, when he helped repair one of the bridges linking Halifax and Dartmouth. For a 10x20-inch illustration, Senecal would set a price of about \$125. To charge much more, he says, would be dishonest. Besides, "money and me are a bad habit." More important to him is knowing that a piece "gets a good home." Once, when he discovered that an illustration he'd sold was to be raffled off, he tried—unsuccessfully—to retrieve it. It's the only one, he says, that he's ever regretted selling.

Senecal now is illustrating a novel by Halifax author Fred Ward, a close friend. The two began collaborating after Senecal gave him an illustration of one of Ward's short stories—an account of a pregnant woman who foresaw her husband's death. Senecal's interpretation is as moving and mystical as the story, and a striking departure from his current preoccupation with crocodile-men and wolf-men.

Another prominent theme is fire. Senecal traces this back to an early childhood experience that affected him profoundly: Riding on a trolley bus in north end Halifax, he says, he saw a clothesline on fire. "I saw flames consuming the clothes." Five years ago, he reproduced that scene and gave the illustration to his aunt. "She doesn't dig that stuff," he remarks. Why did he give it to her, then? "She digs me." Senecal calls his aunt "one of the constants in my life."

Born and raised in Halifax, Senecal had an unsettled childhood. He never knew his parents, lived with his grandmother until she died when he was five, then went from one foster home to another—14 in all—with interludes in an orphanage. He says he doesn't regret the past; despite it, he feels a "sense of roots" in Halifax. He's lived



"Rep-Vac" represents beauty and horror

in Vancouver and New York City, but Halifax has a special hold on him. He knows the city inside out, and remembers exactly which fine buildings were replaced by office towers and shopping malls.

Drawing has been another constant in his life. Since childhood, it's been "second nature," and something to do in class (he was often kicked out of the classroom for doodling, he says). At one point, a sculptor showed him some drawing techniques, but he learned mostly on his own, absorbing what he could. "I consider myself a vessel for what goes on around me," he says. "I feel like a magnet." His only formal training was at the Nova Scotia College of Art and

Design in Halifax, where he met his wife, Elizabeth, now a student at Mount Saint Vincent. Senecal spent three semesters at the art college in the early Seventies. It wasn't an especially successful period for him, he says, although he may go back to the college some day.

For now, he's devoting himself to working at his drawing table, the stereo blasting out everything from rock to country music as he turns out his mysterious, complex illustrations. "The important thing is just to do it," he says, "regardless of anything." What's relatively unimportant, he says, is recognition. His main concern is creating a body of work. "I'd like to try to be an artist," he says.



"Pemba Jade" illustrated a friend's short story

Australia!



For the traveller with a taste for outdoor adventure, it's got everything, and you can have it just as rough and ready or as comfortable as you desire.

Hooray!

By Marilyn MacDonald

Lunch is over. Its remains are scattered around on paper plates below deck: Giant prawns and oysters, avocado and mushrooms, fresh, crusty bread and cheeses, marvellous, succulent fruits—melon, kiwi, passionfruit—beer and white wine. Narrow your eyes a little, see the bounce of the early afternoon sun on the water, listen to the lap of waves against the sides of the boat and it could be home in Halifax, any Sunday afternoon.

But the houses on shore don't look like home. Pastel pink and blue-green, chocolate, tan and wine-bronze brick with tile roofs and wrought iron balconies, they roll opulently uphill in a style which would never do in Halifax, where real wealth, more often than not, chooses to conceal itself.

The beaches tucked away around the harbor, filled on this glorious day with nude sunbathers, don't look like home either. Nor does the opera house, that scallop-shelled exercise in cost overrun, understandable to the custodians of Expo 67's legacy. The gaff-rigged boats that

skim by, their crews dressed up in white flannels and straw boaters, are strange, festive, foreign and, as we sail on, the breeze that sends us below again for sweaters blows off the Sea of Tasman.

Australia.

I am trying to make sense of it on this, my first day in the country. I have trouble remembering what day it is. I left Halifax on Thursday, one of those heartbreakingly beautiful October days, a rare combination of color, crispness and warmth, that make you feel crazy for even thinking about going anywhere else. There was an overnight in Toronto, then 21 or so hours of flight, broken by a two-hour stop in Honolulu, oh, and the international date line. We crossed that, so if this is Sydney, it must be Sunday. Or Saturday? No, Sunday.

Australia is at the bottom of the world. Its people walk around upside down and eat their roasted Christmas turkeys and plum pudding in unbearable midsummer heat. Its ranch wives look like Deborah Kerr in *The Sundowners* and its men are bellicose, beer-swilling male chauvinists. Its animals are weird, hybrid-looking creatures, like the legendary camel which began as a horse, designed by a committee. They bounce, or carry babies in their front pockets, or both. Australia, a friend's daughter says before I leave home, is a hot Canada: It's what we're all looking for.

There are five of us Canadian writers,

Taking off—Australian style—on camels

accompanied by an American tour guide, come to discover the real Australia, guests of the Australian Tourist Commission and CP Air. We are on what's called an adventure travel trip. Like Canada, Australia isn't uniquely qualified to compete for world tourist dollars on the strength of its sophistication. Its cities, the little that I see of them, seem pleasant, attractive, even beautiful. But, like Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, they are not London, Paris and Rome. What Australia still has is an abundance of raw wilderness, of places almost undiscovered. It's an idea whose time, perhaps, has come to a fitness-mad, health-conscious, city-weary market of novelty-seeking world travellers. For the next two weeks we will explore the country with backpacks, with bedrolls, on foot, by boat, by four-wheel drive, on camels. We will get to know the real Australia.

I love the names on the signs in the Sydney railway station. Wurra Wurra. Katoomba. I want to go to Katoomba (and I do, but not till a few days later, on the way back to Sydney.) Right now we're going to Blackheath, the starting point for our hike into the Blue Gum Forest.

Trains must be the same everywhere because the people on the train to Blackheath are the kind of people I'd expect to meet on a train at home, the kind I met

on trains in Italy and France. Older women in dark coats (it's nowhere near as hot as it will get later during our trip but it's in the upper 60s, balmy by Canadian standards) with shopping bags; kids in school uniforms, charging up and down the aisles. Everyone's polite but their interest in who we are and what we're up to is ill-concealed and takes only the slightest overture on our part to bring it to the surface.

One proper matron with a proper British accent—she deplores what passes abroad as the typical Australian accent, calls it “uneducated”—lives on the edge of the forest we're going to camp out in. Forest fires (not man-made ones) are taken for granted in the country. Living with the recurring threat, this woman tells us, makes you disciplined. She has long ago decided which of her possessions she could not bear to part with and has organized them for a speedy departure. She and her husband know exactly how they will proceed, should their home be threatened.

Blackheath has spectacular rhododendrons and clouds of flies. God, what flies. They settle in droves on my shoulders, my back, my eyes, my nose and I, the original Raid kid, find myself giving up. They're not hurting me. I'll just ignore them. It turns out to be an excellent preparation for the Blue Gum Forest, which we head for early the next morning.

We have been rather condescending, some of us, about our superior physical condition. Walk? Of course, we can walk. Do you realize that some of us run, every day, for miles? Our Australian guide, Rod Turner, is laconically pleased to hear it. We'll climb down into the valley then, about eight km, carrying our equipment on our backs, and climb out again the next day.

Australian adventure travel operators, we soon learn, are geared to cater to a range of capacities and tastes and can offer anything from ballooning and bushwalking to air-conditioned bus tours. What you should know is that it's wise not to exaggerate your ability. When an Australian asks you if you're up for a hike he does not mean a pleasant afternoon stroll through the park. If you're in reasonable condition, you'll probably enjoy pushing yourself to the limit and Australia offers you dozens of ways to do it. If you're not, better admit it, unless you've always yearned for a cold-splash introduction to the exquisite pleasures of a marine boot camp.

The forest is extraordinary. The rough path we follow, cut around 1898 to bring artists in to sketch the giant gum trees, is alive with lizards, birds, insects and studded with flowers. Near where we camp a bower bird has spread a bright blue display of bits and pieces, his hopeful snare for a prospective mate. Tucked inside my bedroll, I wake during the night to hear hoofbeats and a sound of snorting. A small herd of brumbies, Australia's wild horses, has drawn close to our camp to have a look.

The cool British orderliness of Adelaide could hardly be a greater contrast. This is an overnight stop on our way to the Flinders Ranges. As soon as we arrive we're taken off to Cleland National Park, a wildlife reserve that's hardly nature in the raw but that does offer us the opportunity to do the one thing none of us can resist: Cuddle an Australian koala.

Our way to the Flinders lies through the Clare Valley wine country. Its vine-

We're pests who interfere with the work and frequently abuse the land. But Keith Slade couldn't be nicer. His station, about 518 square km, is grazing land for 10,000 sheep. The shearers who work for him belong to a union and, depending on how much of the year they want to work, can make up to \$20,000 annually. The union decides when workers will arrive at each station and informs the owner when the shearing will take place. Each year, Slade misses about 800 to 1,000 sheep who never find their way down from the hills. They may go as much as three or four years without shearing.

The Slades have two children, a nine-year-old daughter and a seven-year-old son. They go to school at home, taught by “School of the Air,” a direct radio broadcast from Port Augusta, and supervised by a governess, not a qualified teacher but a young woman whose assistance to the family constitutes a kind of outback finishing school. The job can be tough. At a cattle station near Alice Springs, we meet a governess who also

teaches the children riding, swimming and tennis, helps with the meals and housework and, if the station is short-handed, occasionally rides with the men in cattle musters (roundups). All for about \$100 a week, minus board.

Keith Slade's people kept sheep on this land before him. The old, wooden-beamed shearing shed stands not far from the house where he lives. He and his wife say their life is happy. They not only don't feel isolated, they sometimes think there are too many people around. Their social life—cricket matches,

dances, parties—usually involves drives of 320 km or more. It's a part of life they take for granted.

It's Halloween and, as Malcolm Schultz and Kevin Keltie of Treckabout Adventure Safaris drive us by land cruiser through South Australia, we stop at a succession of parched little towns to ransack their fruit and vegetable stores for a pumpkin. The one we finally find is rather flat and looks more blue than green on the outside but it'll do. By dusk, it's carved into a grin, there's a lighted flashlight inside it and the seeds are toasting in a pan on the campfire, along with lamb chops, sausages, hamburgers, potatoes and onions.

As the wind picks up, shaking the casuarina trees and rattling our five small tents, we start to sing—folk songs, remembered bits of show tunes and finally, in some unexplained burst of



Sydney's opera house from the harbor: There are civilized adventures too

yards spread out side by side with blankets of a purple flower known either as salvation jane or Patterson's curse, depending on your attitude toward its tenacity. Farther on we enter more barren country, stretches of mesa which only seem to lack Randolph Scott looming up through a cloud of dust after a hard trail ride. At the turn of the century, the Australian government encouraged the migration of people to farm these lands, difficult as it is to believe, as we look at them now. The Depression drove the last of them off in the Thirties but you can see their traces in the old fences, the ruins of houses, the occasional church still standing.

By late afternoon, we've arrived at the sheep station run by Keith Slade and his family at Moolooloo. We've been warned that the managers of stations—homesteads, or ranches, we'd call them—in Australia don't generally like strangers.

TRAVEL

patriotism, "O Canada" and, in honor of our American companion, "America the Beautiful" (none of us, including her, dares tackle "The Star-Spangled Banner"). In the morning, as we break camp, we enshrine the pumpkin on a tree stump and wonder if it'll last long enough to cause stories to reach us of the discovery of a strange cult worship of a pumpkin-spirit in the Flinders Ranges of South Australia.

When we arrived in Adelaide, a few days earlier, the driver who'd whisked us off to see the animals at Cleland Park had asked the inevitable questions. How long would we be staying in Australia and where would we be going? His eyes brightened when we mentioned Alice Springs. "Oh, Alice," he said. "There's where you'll see the real Australia."

By the time we leave Adelaide again, this time by plane rather than land cruiser, I am completely absorbed by the idea of the Alice. The red centre. The heart of the outback. So it comes as a bit of a shock to discover in Alice Springs itself a touristy-looking little town, not much unlike many that you see in Florida, complete with a brand-new modern hotel-casino complex. It's not what I expected and neither is John Dare, a bear of a man in whose large hands our fate will rest for the next couple of days.

Our trek into the desert is to be by camel and, if the Alice hardly resembles a watering hole, John's Visitours coach doesn't look much like the proper environment for a small band of intrepid would-be camel drivers either. It's not only air conditioned, it actually has a tape deck, shower, hanging plants and a pretty attendant who keeps waiting on us with trays of wine and lime juice.

Our first stop is at a winery, Chateau Hornby, for tasting—at 10 in the morning. Our second is at Marilyn and Terry Karger's cattle station: Twenty-six hundred square km of land, 10,000 head of Herefords. The Kargers serve us salad, fresh fruit and ice cream for lunch.

It's Melbourne Cup day in Australia and, true to everything we've heard, the whole country stops for the race. Of course we have a pool on the winning horse and listen to the race broadcast, which seems to be over in seconds, on the radio.

Institutions with their roots in Britain have undergone a peculiar transformation in Australia. Affection, much less

reverence, for Mother England isn't common, which is probably a natural condition among the descendants of those off-scourings and rejects whom Britain was quite relieved to have scraped off her sceptred isle and shipped off somewhere safely far away.

Hats, we're told, are an important feature of the Melbourne Cup day celebration. People get up fantastic creations of bird cages and high-rise buildings in what is surely a theatre of the absurd Ascot. Alice Springs is also the scene of the Henley-on-Todd, an annual parody of the Henley regatta where people wearing—yes, *wearing*—wooden boats with holes cut in them race down a totally dry river bed. In the cities we visit,

ing aboard a party of green young chaps from the mainland.

We climb aboard the great ships of the desert and hang on as they heave themselves to their feet. Heave is the right word. It's a three-part motion that involves one lurch forward, another back and a final one that brings you and your camel upright, the animal looking bored and sleepy, you slightly dizzy with exhilaration. Contrary to their press, camels don't smell that bad—at least these don't, not as bad as some horses I've been around. It's wise, however, in the interest of hanging on to your lunch, not to look too closely at whatever mastication is going on inside their mouths and, above all, to do nothing which might encourage them to spit.

The tourist brochures show sweet scenes of Noel on foot, leading daddies and small offspring astride a very sedate-looking camel. But we're supposed to have a little more zip to us than that and he's not about to be cheated of his fun. We're adventure writers, aren't we? Have we ever charged a camel down a sand hill? No? Would we like to? Of course. It's what we've been waiting all our lives to do.

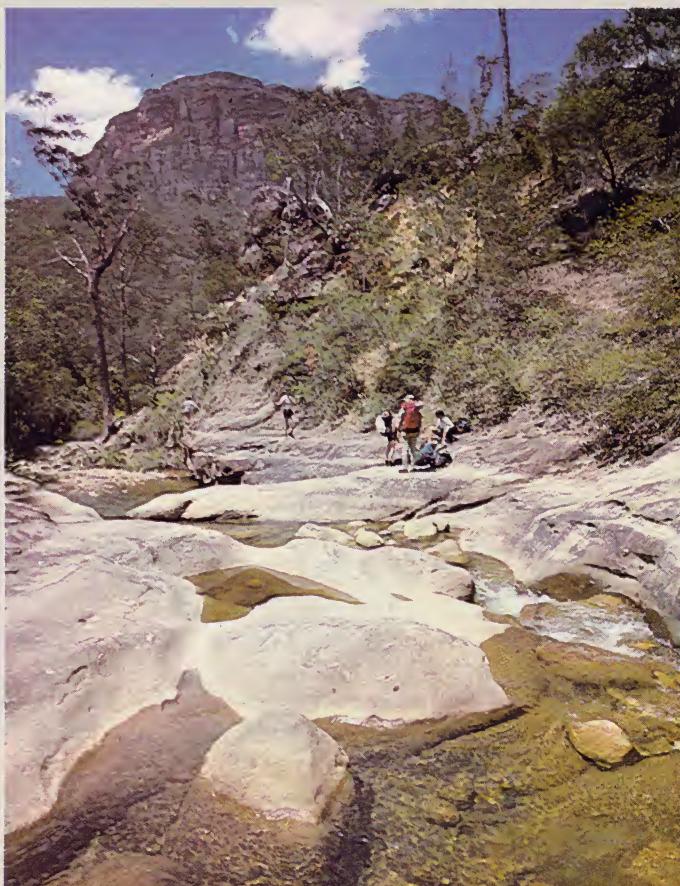
Minutes later we're lined up at the top of the hill, which looks dreadfully high, much higher than it did from the bottom. Seconds later we're headed straight down, hell bent for leather, behind this howling madman, shrieking like possessed creatures ourselves, the camels joining in with their own unique sound, a combination of a low groan and a rolling belch.

By mid afternoon it has reached 43° C. We're picking our way on foot through rocks, arid scrub and what Noel identifies as the remains of ancient aboriginal grindstones and cutting stones. For the first time in my life, I feel myself begin to faint from the heat.

Bright colors dance before my eyes, blinding me. With three of the others, similarly afflicted, I stumble back to one of Noel's jeeps and drink brackish, warm water from a bottle.

By the only standards I have to judge with, it is impossible to believe that anything human could ever have lived in this hell of seared brush and rock-hard wallaby droppings. There is no water, no vegetation, no shade even. Yet human beings did live here, the native people of Australia whose primitive stone implements we've just been looking at.

The matter of Australia's aborigines has been bothering me almost since we arrived in the country. In Alice Springs,



Rest break during the eight-km hike to the Blue Gum Forest

stately avenues of trees, well-kept houses and manicured parks suddenly erupt in shopping areas with places called Potty-bonkers and Neddy's Nosebag. It's a Monty Python skit, the revenge of the colonials.

We arrive, well ventilated, in Rainbow Valley, named for the rich ochre and lavender colors of the rock faces that surround it. Here we are to meet our camels, but first we meet Noel Fullarton, the camel master. He is a leather-colored, white-bearded vision in scruffy T-shirt, jeans and an Arabian head-dress and he looks at us with the delicious anticipation you'd expect to see on the face of a Newfoundland fishing skipper welcom-

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TRAVEL

for the first time, we see large numbers of native people, sitting in watchful groups on lawns in front of public buildings, getting up and moving on, always in groups, sitting down to rest again.

People we meet tell us about the problem of settling aboriginal land claims, a crucial issue in mineral-wealthy Australia, with its potentially rich stores of uranium and oil. At the cattle station, Marilyn Karger shakes her head over the impossibility of understanding the native people. They can live with you, eat your food, be like members of your family, she says. Then, one day, you look around and they're gone.

Shiftless is the word that hangs unspoken in the air but in the desert, shiftless takes on a new meaning. Every movement not made is a calorie of energy unspent. Where food and water are scarce, stillness becomes a life support system. The aborigine's adaptation to the brute force of nature strikes me as heroic. Surely few people in history have lived so much in harmony with their environment, showing so little desire to subdue or exploit it. Instead, they have bent their necks, retreating before the god's great rages, the merciless heat, the drought, the storms, creeping back when, tired out, he became

more tolerant. Only a few cutting stones to mark where they once lived, a few small stones and their art, the rock paintings we've seen in South Australia and will see again in the north.

By evening I am filthier than I've ever been in my life, coated with grime, sweat and red dust. The setting sun has turned the rock faces above the valley fiery bronze and stillness seems to be settling over everything. I walk out, away from the camp and within minutes it's as if the whole thing—coach, campfire, people—had disappeared into some pit which had immediately closed over them. They are lost to sight and sound and I'm alone. The silence is like nothing I've experienced before, broken only by the buzz of a solitary fly and the crunch of my own feet on the baked clay. You begin to understand why those eccentrics we call saints fled to the desert to force themselves to be still.

Circling around, I'm back at camp as suddenly as I was out of it. A laugh from one of us bounces along the glowing red crags. Dinner is served. On the table set

up beside the coach are chunks of cheese, salami, melon, smoked oysters, crackers and cardboard kegs of chilled white Coolibah wine. Completing the incongruity, John Dare is shaking a few pots and pans over a roaring campfire. The meal he prepares consists of fricassee chicken and fresh vegetables, bananas *flambé*, excellent camembert, port and cigars.

Later, we crawl into our bedrolls, form a circle around the fire and count shooting stars. But soon they have competition. The wind comes up, sudden and strong, and within minutes we're being pelted with sheets of blowing sand and clouds of cinders. We fight back, giggling, dragging our bedrolls around to this side of the fire, then that. The wind follows us. I give up, pull the

charged by one of the wild buffalo that roam the property, attracting hunters.

It's our last night together as a group. We've dined well on barramundi, fresh caught that afternoon by one of us, to his utter amazement, in this very river. Our mission now is simple. The river is full of crocodiles. As we beam our powerful flashlight on the water, dozens of beady little pinpoints, seeming to rest on the surface, stare back at us, unblinking. What we plan to do is glide close to one of these pairs of pinpoints, shining our beam directly at it. Then Max will lunge forward and drag the creature into the boat by its jaws or its head or something, so that we can all have a good, close look. If it occurs to anyone to wonder what we're doing there, nobody says so. Nor does anyone muse aloud about what

the hell we're going to do with a live crocodile once we've got it in a boat that's already scarcely clearing the water. We glide and glide, tantalizingly closer and closer to many sets of eyes. But the crocodiles are wiser than we are. Each in turn dips and dives out of sight just as Max is ready to pounce.

The rain forests of the Top End with their steamy, oppressive heat have been our last stop. Next morning a light aircraft flies us out of camp to Darwin, en route to



Rock formations in the heat and silence of the red centre

bedroll over my head and wait till morning, which comes with the gong-like sound of Noel's rise-and-shine voice sometime around five o'clock. A tourist official from Alice who's joined us in the overnight camp looks around at the giddy, ravaged lot of us and pronounces the perfect exit line for our comedy. "This," he says, "sounds much better in the brochures."

Things end, as they began, with a boat ride. We crouch in an outboard motor-powered dinghy, scant inches out of the water of Wildman River, in the dark. Standing ahead of us in the bow is Max Davidson, the major-domo of Wimray Safari Camp which has been our base as we've explored Australia's Northern Territory. Like Noel Fullarton, Max seems to have been designed to pose for tourist photographs: Wide-brimmed bush hat, safari suit, pistol slung in a holster around his hips. One ought to be fair about the gun. He wears it when he takes us out for rides around the place and only because he was once

Sydney and then home. The pictures in my mind tumble over each other. Golden acacia and mauve desert roses as we bump our way over trackless space on our way to the Flinders. The flight of that lovely bird, the kookaburra. A solitary dingo, loping through the twilight at Wimray. Richly colored aboriginal rock paintings in the Top End's Kakadu Park. The wild kangaroos and emus who retreated as we stopped our vehicles and tried to get a closer look.

I've seen jumbucks (sheep) galore and swum in a billabong and been a swagman—swaggerson? (Swags are bedrolls.) But I haven't seen a coolibah tree. I haven't eaten bugs, though they were on the menu in Christos, a Darwin restaurant where we brought our own wine and they refrigerated it and served it to us. "BUGS (in season)," the menu said, but they weren't. And I haven't begun to see this country yet, with all its familiar strangeness, its powerful, muscular grace.

Australia.
I'll just have to go back.



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A meal fit for a Queen

By Pat Lotz

This month we celebrate the birthday of Queen Victoria, who is probably best remembered for saying, "We are not amused." Actually, she was often amused, as photographs of her later in life show. During her reign, the British middle class came into its own, as did another fine old British institution, tea as a meal. Dinner, which had previously been eaten in the late afternoon, gradually advanced to the evening hours. Hearty Victorian eaters needed more than a hot liquid refreshment to keep them going till dinner, so hot buttered toast, scones, crumpets and cakes appeared along with the teapot. For even heartier eaters there was high tea, at which were to be found, according to the *Book of Household Management*, published in 1861, "one or two small hot dishes, cold chicken or game, tongue or ham, salad, cakes of various kinds..."

Which brings us to another notable 19th-century woman, the book's author, Isabella Mary Beeton, whose influence on English eating habits was as great as that of her sovereign's on other aspects of Victorian life. Mrs. Beeton, as she was known to succeeding generations of cooks, was only 25 when her compendium of household information was published. It was a remarkable achievement. It took her four years to compile, ran to over 1,000 pages and sold two million copies within a decade of its publication. Tragically, Isabella Beeton died in childbirth when she was 28.

Today, the first edition of *Household Management* has a quaint air to it, especially in the non-culinary information, but for young brides of that day it was a godsend. For the first time they had a sensibly written guide to managing their homes, and recipes that listed the amounts of required ingredients.

The following recipes are in the spirit of a Victorian high tea. My trifle is less alcoholic than Mrs. B.'s—hers calls for 1½ cups of sherry and six tablespoons of brandy—and I don't know if my veal and ham pie is "ornamented in the approved manner." The recipe for cucumber sandwiches is Mrs. Beeton's.

Veal and Ham Pie

Crust

4 cups pastry flour

6 oz. lard

1 cup cold water

Cut lard into flour with pastry blender until you get the texture of coarse cornmeal. Add water, mixing thoroughly, then knead mixture gently several times to obtain a dryish dough.

Filling

1½ lbs. (approx. 750 g) ¼-inch thick veal cutlet

1½ lbs. ¼-inch lean ham slice
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper
½ tsp. dried majoram
½ tsp. dried thyme
3 hard-boiled eggs, shelled
2 envelopes unflavored gelatin
1¼ cups chicken broth

Cut veal and ham into ¼-inch cubes, mix cubes in bowl with salt, pepper, onion, thyme and majoram. Roll out 2/3 pastry into a ½-inch thick rectangle and arrange in a greased 9x5x3-inch loaf pan, extending pastry about half an inch over the sides. Spread half the mixture in the pan, arrange hard-boiled eggs down the centre and top with remaining mixture. Roll out rest of pastry and place over top of pie, trimming off excess and crimping edges together. Make two holes in top crust and decorate around them with leaves cut from pastry bits. Bake in a preheated 350° F. oven for 1½ hours. At end of half an hour, brush pie with beaten egg. Meanwhile, put broth in small pan and sprinkle gelatin over the top to soften. Let pan stand for a while. Over medium heat stir broth until gelatin has dissolved and set aside at room temperature. When pie is done place on a wire rack to cool for 30 minutes. Pour gelatin into pie through a small funnel. Allow to cool for 2 hours, then cover loosely with foil and refrigerate overnight. Remove it from pan before serving. Serves 8.

Salad

1 large Boston lettuce
1 bunch watercress
1 bunch spring onions
4 tomatoes
3 tbsp. oil
1 tbsp. vinegar
salt, pepper

Wash and dry lettuce, watercress and onions and arrange in bowl. Cut tomatoes in quarters and place around the edge of greens. Mix oil, vinegar, salt and pepper and pour over salad.

Scones

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tbsp. sugar
3 tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. salt
2 oz. butter
1 egg
¾ cup milk

Sift dry ingredients together. Using a pastry blender or two knives, cut in butter until mixture has texture of cornmeal. Add egg and a little over half a cup of milk and stir quickly and lightly, adding more milk as needed to obtain a soft dough. Turn dough onto a floured board, knead gently about a dozen times and roll out to a thickness of about half

an inch. Cut into 2-inch rounds, place on a lightly greased cookie sheet and bake in preheated 425° F oven for about 12 minutes. Serve warm or cooled. Makes approx. 18 scones.

Trifle

2 sponge cake layers (8-inch size)
¾ cup sherry
½ cup strawberry jam
2 cups milk
4 egg yolks
3 tbsp. sugar
2 tsp. cornstarch
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 cup heavy cream
2 tbsp. sugar
Mixed candied peel

Cut cake into pieces to make 3 layers in your bowl. Over first 2 layers sprinkle ¼ cup sherry, spread with ¼ cup jam. Do the same with second layer then sprinkle last layer with sherry. Set aside while you make the custard. Add milk to top of a double boiler and heat, over boiling water, until bubbles form around the edge of the milk. In a bowl, blend egg yolks with sugar and cornstarch. Add hot milk gradually, stirring all the time with a wire whisk. Return mixture to double boiler, add vanilla and cook over simmering water, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens enough to coat a metal spoon. Cool slightly, pour over cake mixture and cool. When trifle is cool, whip cream with sugar until stiff and pile on top of trifle. Decorate with mixed peel or glacé cherries. Serves 8.

Walnut Cake

2 cups flour
1 tsp. baking powder
8 oz. butter
1 cup sugar
4 medium eggs, separated
2 oz. chopped walnuts
few drops vanilla extract
10 walnut halves for decoration

Sift flour with baking powder. Cream butter and sugar, beat in egg yolks, one at a time. Stir in flour and chopped nuts and vanilla. Whip the egg whites until stiff and fold into the egg and flour mixture. Pour into 8-inch round greased and floured cake pan and bake in preheated 350° F oven for 1 hour. Leave cake in pan for a while after removing from oven, then take it from pan and cool on wire rack. Cover cake with a glacé-type icing and decorate with walnut halves.

Cucumber Sandwiches

Thin slices of bread-and-butter
Cucumber
oil, vinegar and pepper

Stamp out rounds of bread-and-butter, the size of the rounds of cucumber, which should be cut very thin and steeped for a while in oil and vinegar. Lay the rounds of cucumber between those of bread-and-butter, and sprinkle over a little pepper.



P.E.I. pots and pans hit the big time

Paderno Canada of Charlottetown already has an American branch plant. Now it's trying to elbow its way into the big-money European cookware market

George Serra, a compact man with intense blue eyes and a cultured European accent, leans back in his office chair and waxes eloquent about pots and pans. For Serra, a 57-year-old businessman from Genoa, Italy, pots and pans spell money. Since his firm, Paderno Canada Ltd., started making gourmet cookware in Charlottetown in 1979, it's become one of the Island's hottest business success stories. This year, sales are expected to top \$3 million.

Paderno distributes the cookware through four major department stores and several chains of gourmet specialty stores in Canada. But 80% of sales are in the United States. Last year Serra signed a \$300,000 contract with an American

doesn't bother Serra.

"We have an excellent product," he says. Paderno makes about 40 kinds of stock pots, braziers, casseroles, frysheets, omelette pans and saucerpans of varying sizes. They're made from stainless steel with $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch aluminum pads on the bottom for maximum heat distribution. It's high-quality stuff, but also highly priced, costing two or three times as much as standard cookware. It's the kind of cookware found in good hotels and restaurants, although Serra says only 10% of his sales are to institutions.

Aggressive marketing has helped make the firm an instant success. Serra's been lucky in his timing, he says, because he's riding a North American tide of

interest in cooking. Many young, middle class couples are practising their skills in the kitchen, and they're looking for good tools. "People don't want cheap stuff anymore," Serra says.

As a boy, Serra studied to be a sea captain, planning to follow a family and Genoese tradition. But by the time he was 20, he turned to manufacturing and eventually set up several companies, including Alluminio Paderno near Milan, which made high-quality professional cookware.

"The technology developed for cookware in Europe is the best in the world," Serra says. He transferred the latest technology to P.E.I.'s West Royalty Industrial Park in 1979, bringing with him from Italy his chief engineer, Paul Lunardi, now in charge of machinery and the development of new products.

Paderno's success is an anomaly on an otherwise bleak P.E.I. industrial landscape. Since the 100-acre West Royalty Industrial Park, Charlottetown's largest industrial area, opened in 1976, 11 of its firms have gone into receivership. That's one-third of all the industries located there. Many were financed with

loans from the province, and the closings mean \$7.5 million in writeoffs by Industrial Enterprises Incorporated (IEI), the provincial lending agency.

The failed firms included a manufacturer of sunglasses, a steel fabricator, a maker of high technology measuring equipment for computers. IEI officials admit none of the business was compatible with local markets or raw materials. Problems shared by all Island manufacturers are high electricity rates and the high cost of bringing in raw materials and shipping out manufactured goods.

Paderno's pots and pans don't exactly blend with the Island's major industries, agriculture, tourism and fishing. But Serra says his new location is no handicap. The extra cost of transportation (the steel and aluminum he uses comes from Ontario) and the high electricity costs are more easily absorbed when dealing with high-priced items, he says.

It was the New Brunswick government that first approached Serra after he sold his Milan plant. P.E.I. officials then offered him "better terms"—a \$1.6-million low-cost loan from IEI with no interest during the first two years. The Department of Regional Economic Expansion kicked in a \$720,000 start-up grant that amounted to a little less than half the initial capital costs for the building and equipment. The feds are also subsidizing wages of some of the 36 employees through an on-the-job training program.

Other factors in Paderno's success include the value of the Canadian dollar, which makes Canadian goods financially attractive to foreign buyers, and cheap labor. Serra says his largely unskilled workers earn an average of about \$5.50 an hour—about half what workers make in similar jobs in the U.S. and industrialized European countries. Another advantage he has over European manufacturers exporting to the U.S. is that U.S. import duty is lower on some Canadian goods than on European-made goods.

Paderno's 10,000-square-metre plant and present equipment will allow it to manufacture about \$5 million worth of cookware annually, twice its present production. Serra's confident that will happen. He estimates the metal cookware market in North America alone to be worth \$2.5 billion a year in retail sales. That translates into about \$800 million for manufacturers. "We have less than 1% of that market now," Serra says. "So we have all kinds of possibilities."

— Rob Dykstra



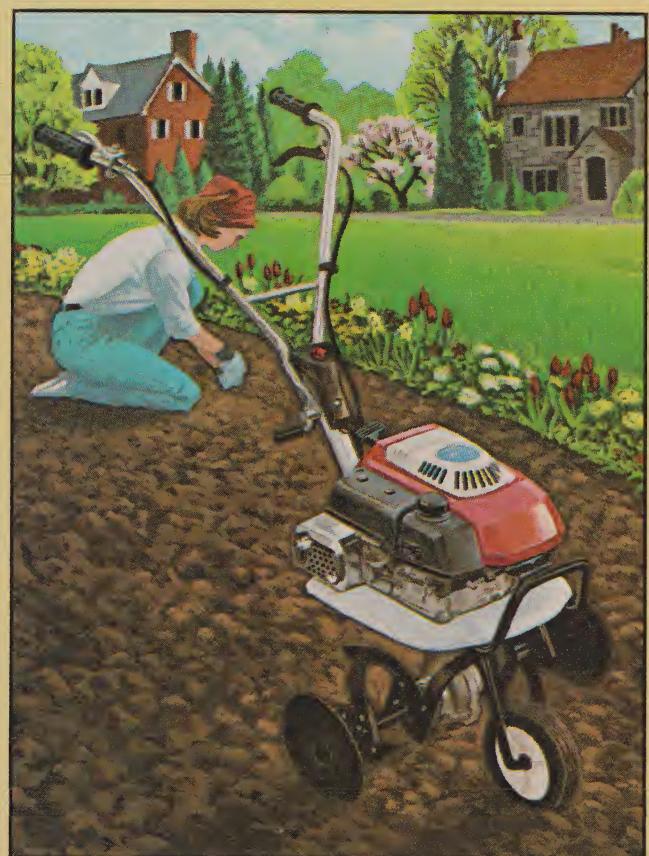
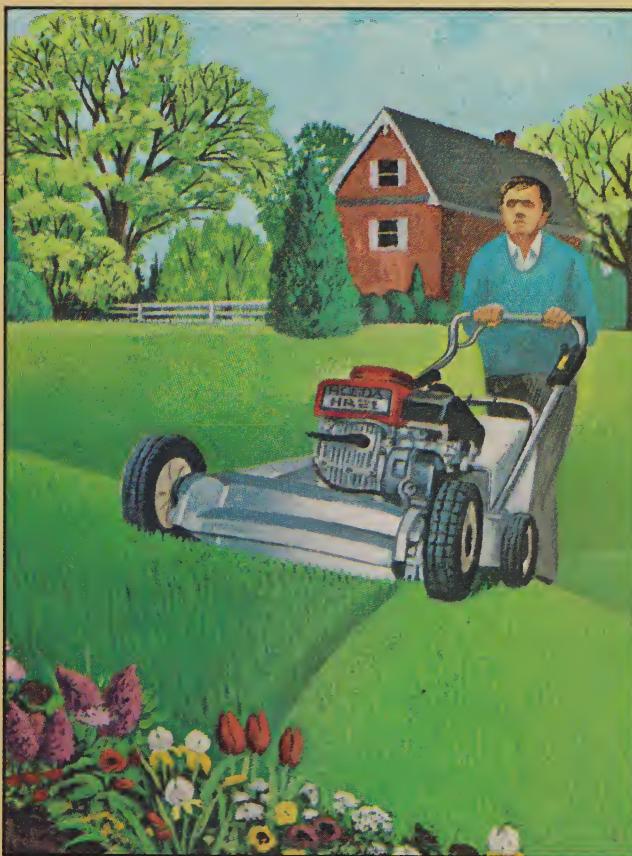
Serra: "People don't want cheap stuff"

distributor. This spring he was in the final stages of signing another U.S. deal worth \$1 million. Business is so good in the U.S., in fact, that Serra has formed a U.S. subsidiary, Paderno, Inc., with warehouses in New York and California.

As well, Paderno is attempting to elbow its way into the lucrative European market, now comfortably occupied by such big-name cookware manufacturers as Lagostina of Italy, Cuisinart of France and WMF of Germany. It's like taking a Canadian-made car and trying to compete with the likes of Ferrari, Peugeot or Mercedes-Benz. But the competition

is the best in the world," Serra says. He transferred the latest technology to P.E.I.'s West Royalty Industrial Park in 1979, bringing with him from Italy his chief engineer, Paul Lunardi, now in charge of machinery and the development of new products.

Paderno's success is an anomaly on an otherwise bleak P.E.I. industrial landscape. Since the 100-acre West Royalty Industrial Park, Charlottetown's largest industrial area, opened in 1976, 11 of its firms have gone into receivership. That's one-third of all the industries located there. Many were financed with



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IT'S A HONDA

TECHNOLOGY

Fighting the curse of junk language

The Atlantic Institute of Education's Blue Line Editor brings a computer's brain to bear on the problem of unreadable prose

The Blue Line Editor, computerized child of the human brains of a married couple at the Atlantic Institute of Education, Halifax, is a system to conquer a curse of our time: Unreadable jargon, stupefying bureaucratese, ubiquitous gobbledegook, off-putting legalese, junk language. Designers of the program are Eugene Pond, behavioral psychologist and research associate at the AIE, and his wife, Sharlie, an AIE technical analyst. The Blue Line Editor's purpose, like that of flesh-and-blood copy editors, is to make unreadable prose readable, and perhaps its greatest challenges lie in the writings of lawyers, bureaucrats, academics and teachers.

How does it work? First, you type the manuscript into a computer, into which the Blue Line Editor has already been programmed. Within seconds, the system assigns each word a score to establish a "desired reading level," and identifies the relatively incomprehensible words that require change. "Readability formulas" are nothing new. In fact, the Blue Line Editor incorporates the Flesch and Dale-Chall formulas, whose advocates count all the words and syllables in a piece of text. The theory is that the longer the words and sentences, the tougher it is to understand. "Readability" plummets. The Blue Line Editor, however, also includes Eugene Pond's own

formula, and a masterlist of 10,000 common words.

It may be a comment on the quality of contemporary prose that, if it weren't for Pond's interest in precision-teaching programs for the mentally retarded, he might never have invented the Blue Line Editor. AIE research on special-education programs indicated that children who could not tie their shoes, for instance, were expected to solve problems in abstract mathematics. What precision-teaching did was train teachers not only to give such youngsters basic instruction but also to assign texts that matched their levels of comprehension. The results were encouraging. In one case, a child who was supposedly autistic—meaning incapable of properly responding to his environment—learned to read at the Grade 8 level.

Matching teaching material to students' ability to absorb it is the Ponds' primary interest in education. One problem is that educators face such a huge onslaught of material every year that they have no choice but to depend on the publishers to define grade levels, and the publishers use a variety of readability formulas. "As things stand now," Eugene Pond says, "few teachers would ever consider calculating the readability level of new materials to verify a publisher's stated grade level, let alone compare

various formula scores." Even if teachers had the time, they probably wouldn't know how.

The Ponds believed that properly matching students with reading material might reduce learning difficulties in all education programs. Eugene therefore developed Project READS, meaning Readability Evaluation and Documentation Service. (And how's that for the use of short words?) Project READS offers writers and educators a means of estimating for which reading level a text is appropriate before it hits the curriculum, and Pond argues that it's both more versatile and more accurate than the Flesch and Dale-Chall methods.

Project READS uses 25 files of words that frequently pop up at given grade levels in assorted school subjects. The project staff—meaning Eugene and Sharlie Pond—have also assessed and revised text for programs in health education and nursing at Dalhousie University and Victoria General Hospital in Halifax. Moreover, Project READS has found its way into the New Brunswick Department of Education, the Nova Scotia Commission on Drug Dependency, and the Nova Scotia school system. The Ponds have analysed prose for the federal Justice Department, and a booklet that the Law Society of Nova Scotia published in 1977. With respect to that publication, Eugene Pond says, "We're fairly safe in saying half the people of Nova Scotia would have had difficulty reading the material."

Out of this methodology came the Blue Line Editor. Using Eugene Pond's specifications, Dymaxion Research Ltd., Halifax, wrote the computer language, and operates the program on its time-sharing, data-processing system. Managed by Sharlie Pond, the service was made available to writers, editors and publishers through Brandon International Marketing in Halifax. Schools and government have access to the Blue Line Editor through the AIE.

But writers, editors and publishers are apparently not lining up to employ Blue Line. Perhaps they see it as a competitor. Sharlie asks, "How do you tell someone who's been in a 200-year-old publishing business for some 50 years that they could still be taught a thing or two about editing." The Ponds insist Blue isn't "a superbrain." It's just a computer program. For those who want to apply a readability formula, it eliminates hours of manual calculation. And for some writers, it could work not as an ego-batterer but simply as a needed hint that it's time to consult a thesaurus.

— Darlene Acker



Sharlie and Eugene Pond designed the computerized editor

MODERN DANCE



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PROFESSIONS

The secret society of doctors

How do you find out whether your doctor is competent? You don't. Only his colleagues know for sure. And they'll never tell

By Stephen Kimber

For Dr. Om Chhabra, the incident in 1980 involving the 15-year-old girl became—for no particular reason he can explain now—the last straw. She had come to his Canning, N.S., office complaining of abnormally heavy menstrual bleeding and abdominal pain. He referred her to Dr. S.V. Anand, a specialist in nearby Kentville. "There could have been 10 causes for such symptoms," Chhabra, a 61-year-old general practitioner, explains, "but he didn't do a urine test or a blood test or any other test. He just took out her appendix. He saw her at 9:20 and, by 9:45, he was operating. When I asked him why, he told me there'd been a cancellation in the operating room. Can you imagine that!"

For Chhabra, that quick and—he believes—questionable diagnosis was the final chapter in a fat mental book full of similar cases. Chhabra was convinced that two of his own patients had died and one had suffered brain damage because of Anand's treatments. "I could not have lived with my conscience if I had kept my mouth shut," he says. On Feb. 11, 1980, Chhabra complained to the medical advisory committee at the Blanchard-Fraser Memorial Hospital in Kentville, where he and Anand practised.

That was the beginning of a nasty dispute that ultimately cost Chhabra his lucrative practice and Anand a chunk of his formerly fine reputation, divided residents in Nova Scotia's tranquil Annapolis Valley, cast a cloud over the Kentville hospital's medical standards and raised serious questions about the way the Provincial Medical Board (PMB) disciplines doctors. Despite all that, admits Blanchard-Fraser's executive-director Peter Mosher, the Chhabra affair probably won't change the way the medical establishment polices itself. "The case was so bizarre in its own right," he says, "that I don't think anyone will notice the broader questions."

Chhabra, an India-born and trained doctor who'd previously practised in Africa, England and India, came to Canning in September, 1971. Anand, who had arrived from India in 1965, helped him get settled. But the two doctors did not get along. Says Peter Mosher: "I don't know why—and I've tried to figure it out—but I think it started as some sort of personal dispute."

Chhabra says it was nothing of the kind. "I saw things being done that I could not agree with." Less than six

months after Chhabra arrived, he says, Anand asked him to bill Medical Services Incorporated (MSI), the provincial agency that administers medicare, as Anand's principal assistant in an operation. In truth, Chhabra says, Dr. J.J. Quinlan, a Blanchard-Fraser staff surgeon (who couldn't file for a fee from MSI) performed the operation, assisted by Anand and Chhabra. Replacing the staff surgeon's name with Anand's pushed Anand's fee four times higher than normal, Chhabra's twice as high.

Chhabra admits to fudging bills to coincide with Anand's on two other occasions before informing his colleague "that I couldn't be a party to it anymore." He stopped referring his patients to Anand, the area's only fully qualified surgeon. "My patients wanted to know why I wouldn't send them to the surgeon," Chhabra remembers. "After about 15 months, one or two doctors who knew about the situation suggested we try to patch up. I did try."

Chhabra, however, says nothing changed. Eventually, he even began to question Anand's competence. "There were cases in which operations were performed unnecessarily," Chhabra alleges, "and there were cases where there was no proper investigation before surgery."

But the hospital advisory committee dismissed Chhabra's charges as groundless, and its board of directors asked him to withdraw them. He refused. Chhabra, in turn, asked the board to appoint outside investigators to look into his charges. The board said no.

On June 30, 1980, the hospital board called Chhabra "a disturbing influence" and revoked his admitting privileges, preventing him from admitting patients there, even for routine tests. "I calculate that that meant I lost 50% of my income or more, about \$3-4,000 a month for 27 months," Chhabra says now.

Believing the decision "discredited my integrity," Chhabra wrote to provincial Health Minister Gerald Sheehy in October, 1980. Sheehy turned Chhabra's documentation over to the Provincial Medical Board, an autonomous group of 14 doctors (seven appointed by the province, six by the Nova Scotia Medical Society and one by Dalhousie University's medical school), which is responsible for licensing and disciplining the province's 1,500 doctors. Last May, the board found Anand guilty of professional misconduct for "failure to provide competent medical treatment to certain



Chhabra won a victory, lost a practice



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PROFESSIONS

patients and irregular and improper billing practices with respect to certain claims submitted to Medical Services Incorporated." Although the board considered eight serious complaints, including one that Anand had "improperly performed an operation causing complications which resulted in the patient's death," the PMB didn't say which of Chhabra's allegations it believed or why. But the PMB apparently didn't consider his transgressions very serious. It handed down its least severe penalty—an official reprimand. The board—surprisingly—also reprimanded Chhabra after finding him guilty of professional misconduct for the way in which he levelled his allegations against Anand.

The decision, Peter Mosher says, left the hospital board in a quandary. "We had no idea on what basis they'd made their decision." The hospital asked the medical board for an explanation, "but they said it was a confidential matter, and they weren't required to give out reasons for their decisions." As a result, the hospital decided to trust its own medical advisory committee's judgment. Although Mosher says the hospital is "satisfied Dr. Anand is a competent surgeon," he admits that "patients still want to know if the doctor is competent and if the hospital is taking proper precautions to protect their health."

Others want to know why Anand wasn't prosecuted by MSI after the board concluded he'd filed "improper" bills. But a spokesman for MSI says it found no evidence of fraud.

Today, Anand continues to practise at the Kentville hospital. Chhabra has left Nova Scotia. Despite the medical board's ruling, the hospital had refused to restore his admitting privileges, relenting only this March when a blue-chip citizen's committee rallied to his cause. By then, it was too late to smooth the situation over. "There were no winners," concedes Blanchard-Fraser's Peter Mosher.

Could a similar incident happen again

in Nova Scotia or in another Atlantic province? Easily. Doctors in all four provinces police their own professional conduct and, in such circumstances, the public's—and even a hospital board's—right to know often takes second place to the medical profession's desire to wash its dirty linen in private.

"Unless a doctor is suspended or his licence is revoked," Mosher says, "we aren't even told about a complaint. We're like patients; we'd like to know about how well a doctor is performing, too." Acadia University sociologist Tom Regan, a specialist in medical sociology who was involved in the pro-Chhabra citizen's committee, adds: "I know of one recent case in Nova Scotia in which a hospital was considering whether to grant admitting privileges to two doctors. They asked the PMB if the doctors were licensed to practise and if they had been the subjects of any disciplinary proceedings. The board's reply was that they were licensed, but they wouldn't disclose any other information. How is a hospital board supposed to make informed judgments in such cases?"

"Doctors in all four provinces police their own professional conduct and, in such circumstances, the public's—and even a hospital board's—right to know often takes second place to the medical profession's desire to wash its dirty linen in private"

take ads in newspapers—as the Barristers' Society does—to announce licence withdrawals. And he admits that less severe penalties aren't even noted in the register. "People like you used to come to us and say why not put all this information out to the media," MacDonald recalls, "so one time, when we took away the licences of two doctors, we gave a publicity release on it. No one used it."

But MacDonald says the board doesn't believe it should give reasons for its decisions. "You can get into a horrible mess that way," he argues. Tom Regan disagrees. "When a judge makes a ruling,



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...Thinking theoretically
... doing practically

Regan: Doctors need pressure to act

he often includes a lengthy brief to explain the reasons for his decision. But self-regulating boards like the PMB feel they make proper decisions and they want them to be undebatable when they go before lay people. By not explaining their decisions, they make it essentially impossible to debate them on their merits."

That's what happened in the Chhabra affair. As a result, no one emerged satisfied. While Chhabra won a Pyrrhic victory at the PMB, he lost his practice. And, at 61, his chances of launching another practice are, he admits, "limited." While Anand won the support of his hospital board, he suffered too. "He's a very hurt man," Peter Mosher says, "and his practice has been hurt, too." The controversy also cost Canning a favorite family doctor and the Blanchard-Fraser Memorial Hospital board much of its credibility.

Perhaps the most unfortunate thing about the whole nasty affair, however, is that nothing will change as a result of it. "The problem," Tom Regan says, "is that everyone in a position to do something about it would prefer to leave clinical and ethical matters to the physicians themselves."

Without outside pressure, he admits, there's little hope that physicians will heal themselves.



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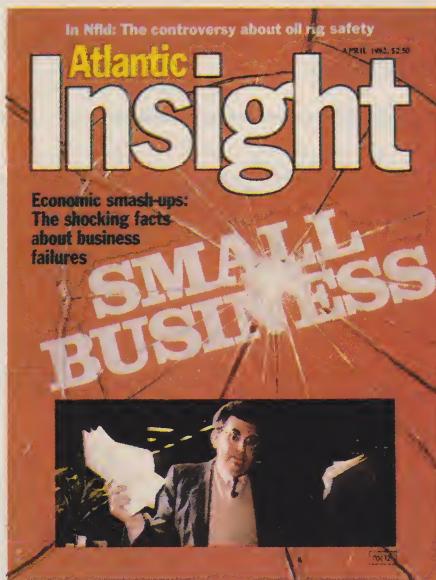
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PROFILE

"I miss playing with the boys"

Duke Nielsen, the sole survivor of Don Messer's original band, reflects on a 40-year career as bear-wrestler, fire-swallowing, stand-up comedian and bass fiddle player

Sixty years ago, long before he turned into either Uncle Luke or The Human Volcano, Julius Nielsen, age 7, played tenor horn with the Salvation Army band in Woodstock, N.B. That was the start of a long and lively career. Before it was over, he spent 40 years barnstorming around the country, performing at anything from bear-wrestling to banjo-playing. And he became nationally famous as Duke Nielsen, the bouncing bass fiddle player in Canada's best loved old-time band—Don Messer and His Islanders.

Today, Nielsen is the sole survivor of Messer's original band. He lives on a wildlife sanctuary at Milltown Cross, on the eastern end of Prince Edward Island, plays the organ in the Baptist Church on Sundays, plays bass at the odd party. "After 40 years of one-night stands," he says, "it feels pretty good to get away from it." Then he adds wistfully: "But I miss playing with the boys."

Nielsen's association with Don Messer began in Saint John, N.B., in 1931. The son of a professional cornet player, he grew up in Woodstock and Saint John (boyhood chums named him Duke after he boasted of a nobleman in the family tree). At age 16, he was working as a short order cook in a diner where Messer sometimes ate after playing at local dances. One night, Messer heard Duke strumming a banjo in the kitchen and asked him to audition. That led to performances with Messer's band at barn dances and a weekly radio show over CHSJ.

By then, singer Charlie Chamberlain had joined them. Although the radio broadcasts became popular features, cash was short. Barnstorming was the band's bread-and-butter, and they spent much of their time on the "kerosene circuit"—dance halls lit by oil lamps. Once, at Black's Harbour, N.B., they were paid off in cans of sardines.

The band—first called the New Brunswick Lumberjacks and later the Backwoods Breakdown Trio—played old-time music, Dixieland, swing and pop tunes of the day. People couldn't get enough of them. "Once," Nielsen recalls, "when we played a hall in Saint John, a group of fellas threatened to beat us up if we stopped playing." After one Island concert, the crowd wanted to dance, but all the benches in the hall were nailed to the sagging floor. One old man jumped up and shouted, "To hell with that! We'll take up the benches quick enough! We don't care about the slant in the floor.

Go play the dance!" The crowd then ripped up the benches and piled them on stage. Unfortunately, one bench toppled and crushed Nielsen's 200-year-old bass fiddle. Nielsen rebuilt the instrument, splinter by splinter, many times. A car sideswiped it when it was lashed to the front fender of a Model A during a New Brunswick tour. A swaying truck crushed it on a rough P.E.I. ferry crossing, and a practical-joking musician blew the lid off when he dropped an over-size firecracker inside the sound chamber. Each time Duke patiently glued it together again.

Don Messer's popularity grew as the Depression deepened. So did opportuni-



Nielsen: Forty years of barnstorming

all the band members, Nielsen had the greatest sense of showmanship, MacAulay says. It grew out of vaudeville acts such as the Steve Worden Variety Show at the Empire Theatre in Saint John. As a teen-ager, Nielsen sang, played musical instruments and, in his most outlandish stage performance, wrestled a bear. The bear was part of an animal act from Boston. "The bear just took a liking to me," Nielsen says. "She was like a big cat." After one exhibition, the emcee dared anyone from the audience to match Duke's feat. The volunteer, a half-drunk pro fighter, squared off and hit the bear in the snout. The bear promptly fired him over the orchestra pit, four rows into the audience.

Don Messer put Nielsen's vaudeville skills to work in a stage show to warm up audiences before concerts. He did comedy skits, sleight-of-hand, and Houdini-like escape stunts that charmed children and adults alike. The eye-popping show opener, however, was his fire-eating act. Billed as The Human Volcano, Duke devoured flaming gasoline. (He gave that up when he was finally poisoned by the lead content of the gas he used.) About this time, he developed the stage character of Uncle Luke, a banjo-plucking farmer who told dry jokes and sang corny songs, a close copy of Nashville's Grandpa Jones. More durable than The Human Volcano, Uncle Luke played the fool for over 30 years.

Television brought Don Messer and His Islanders to national prominence. They moved to Halifax for local TV appearances, and *Don Messer's Jubilee* went national in 1959. It led the ratings for a decade until the CBC dumped the show—a move that drew thousands of protest letters and petitions. Four provincial legislatures passed resolutions opposing the decision. The dispute even reached the floor of the House of Commons. The band's CBC career was over, but CHCH Hamilton syndicated weekly shows until Messer's death in 1973.

After his retirement, Nielsen started a new career, working as a professional photographer (weddings and family portraits) until three heart attacks stopped him. Now he helps his wife, Dot, with her conservation efforts at the Harvey Moore Wildlife Sanctuary. And he keeps in touch with some of the old Don Messer crew: Drummer Warren MacRae, who now works for a Dartmouth, N.S., insurance company; pianist Waldo Munro, of Spryfield, N.S., who plays trombone with a Dixieland band and drives a cab; guitarist Cecil McEachern and clarinettist Ray Simmons who live in Charlottetown. McEachern and Simmons visit often, and once a year, when Duke and Ray play for a senior citizens' party at the Montague Lions Club, they revive some of that old Don Messer magic.

—Finley Martin

OPINION

A parents' guide to saving kids from TV

Hint: All you need is love

By Harry Bruce

Some fathers click off the family TV at seven o'clock every night and, while their children study for three hours, actually get away with leaving it off. They are usually schoolteachers, like the amazing Charles Frye of San Francisco. When Frye's set conked out, he refused to buy another and, though his five boys found life without TV unbearable at first, they soon took up the very activities that, long before television, had helped mould the character of millions of earlier boys. The young Fryes joined Boy Scouts, played football, read novels, tap-danced, worked to earn their pocket-money, and so on. Their father bragged to *Newsweek*, "I know of no other children that age who have that range of interest."

How come father Frye made *Newsweek*? After all, depriving your children of TV hardly ranks with, say, copping a Nobel prize. The answer is that worrying about what TV does to children has become an industry, a nonstop international caterwauling among well-meaning experts, and the periodic obsession of just about every parent with either a young child who may still go wrong, or an older child who has somehow not gone right. TV public-service messages once urgently asked us at 10 p.m. if we knew where our children were; now, they urgently ask us if we know what shows the kids are watching. No doubt someone, somewhere, is arguing right now that it's better for children to roam the streets at night than to stay home watching *The Rockford Files*.

The concern is so overwhelming I'm sure I'm sitting on a best seller. My wife and I will share the authorship, and we'll call the book, "How We Saved Our Children from the TV Demon (and Still Caught Every Episode of *Barney Miller*)."
Even though our three children have spent their lives within a few feet of one television set or another, even though each has sat before that dreadful, mesmerizing boob-tube for heaven only knows how many thousands of mind-corrupting hours, they are smarter than I was at their ages. They are no less imaginative, critical, literate or able to distinguish right from wrong than I was. They are no more violent, and no less sensitive to the horrors of real violence. Not one has ever been in trouble with the police, got drunk, smoked tobacco or marijuana, come anywhere near failing at school.

So what went right?

First, we are strictly a one-set family. The moment you buy a second set you

invite TV addiction to come into your house and sit on your kids' backs. With only one set, no one ever gets to wallow in the stupefying luxury of being utterly alone with television for hours on end. Someone is forever coming in, flopping himself down, asking what's on, saying, "Hey, this is no good, let's look at Channel 7," or, "Fill me in on the plot. Is she supposed to be in love with him?" Others are forever bouncing up to answer the phone, have a bath, get a chocolate-chip cookie, arrange a skating party, a hike, a sail. If they return to the TV at all, they bring news of the real world.

Still others (my wife and I) are forever sticking our heads in the TV room to nag. *Isn't it your bed-time? Are you watching Fantasy Island again? What crap! Didn't you say you wanted to get up early tomorrow to study for that science test? Don't you know that Real People will turn your brains into mush? Have you done your homework? How long have you been cooped up in here watching crumby television? How's the math going this term, anyway?*

The children don't jump smartly to their feet, salute, douse the set and report to their little desks. But the nagging does break their concentration on, say, *Eight is Enough*. It may earn us parents black looks but it reminds our children, again and again, that we think television is unimportant and they are important. Even the location of our set is a subtle reminder that although we'd rather not live without television, we really don't think it matters much.

We have never had one of those basement "family rooms" that so often become subterranean temples for solitary contemplation of the goddess Television. Our one set has always been within shouting distance of the kitchen, front hall, and main stairway. Right now, it shares a second-floor bedroom with a broken sewing machine, a bowling-pin lamp, a squeaky, 40-year-old, stuffed chair, and a couple of pictures that are leaning against the wall because we can't be bothered hanging them up. This is a room for things we're not quite ready to take to the city dump. Since the bathroom is next door we often hear, as accompaniment to some cop-show shoot-out, the loud report of our toilet flushing. Reality is always that close.

Our TV set reminds me of the only one in a cheap hotel or university residence, the one in the lobby. It's there for long-term guests who sometimes get tired of being alone in their rooms and want to sit around in the evening with people they trust. It's there to help you kill a little time. It's there as a whipping boy, too. When we join the kids in front

of the set, we groan at their favorite shows, ridicule heroes and heroines alike, sneer at commercials, insult newscasters. Having a scapegoat that can't fight back is highly sociable.

We never try to control our children's television habits with blackout periods or lists of forbidden shows. We never feel TV is so evil we should banish it from our house, nor so captivating we should trust it as a babysitter. Often, it's not captivating at all, it's just company. Ever since our oldest boy first greeted the *Flintstones*, left it to *Beaver*, loved Lucy and grasped that father knew best, our kids have played with other toys while the TV beeped, blinked and blabbed along beside them like a friendly little robot. The top drawer of the low bureau on which the TV sits holds nothing but puzzles, games, clay, crayons, glue, scissors, books, model boats, and so on.

Finally, we live with TV not by rules but by deals: *Okay, you can stay up till 10 but only if you quit watching TV at 9:30, jump into bed and read a book.... Yes, since it's Friday you can stay up to watch the Mork and Mindy special, but that means you get only 90 minutes of cartoons tomorrow morning. Then we go to the library. OK? OK.* The closest thing we have to a rule is a ban on the barbaric custom of taking entire meals up to the TV room. (We relent only when confronted with the old my-teacher-told-me-to-be-sure-to-watch-this-documentary-about-Beluga-whales routine.) We tell the kids the reason for the ban. It's not that eating fishsticks while watching *The Gong Show* will make them cross-eyed and petrify their brains, it's that we like to sit down with our children at a big, round, kitchen table, and that's that.

We are a talkative, raucous bunch. We tell rotten jokes, and touch one another a lot. We engage in a fair bit of hugging, wrestling, soft punching, mock-karate-punching, knee-squeezing, tickling, screaming and, in quieter moments, solemn covenants with regard to the trading of back-scratching treatments. Whenever the kitchen sounds are particularly interesting, they lure a child or two out of the TV room. Moreover, I simply can't watch television without grabbing one of them by the neck, or swinging a cushion like a battle-axe. That must make me sound like a terrible nuisance but that's the whole point. Parents can't look after children without becoming the biggest nuisances in the kids' lives and, when it comes to television's notorious influence on the young, the best defence is the oldest defence: All you need is love.

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4. Do you know the limits of your insurance on specific items such as jewelry, silver, works of art and furs?

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5. Does your residential insurance cover the building only?

Yes No

6. Considering the rate of inflation, do you annually review your insurance protection with your agent, broker or company representative?

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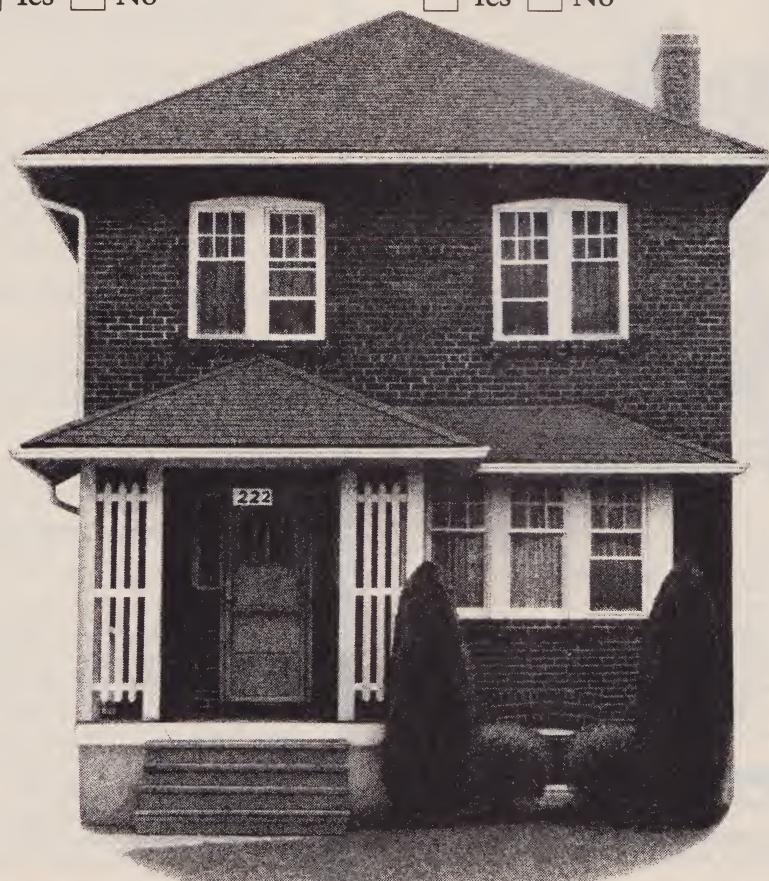
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CALENDAR



NEWFOUNDLAND

May—The Good Brothers: Singing group, Arts and Culture Centres, May 29, Stephenville; May 30, Corner Brook; June 1, Gander; June 2, Grand Falls; June 4, St. John's

May 1-31—Michael Czerewko: Exhibition, Memorial University Art Gallery, St. John's

May 1-31—Gordon Smith: Exhibition, Memorial University Art Gallery, St. John's

May 8, 9—First Annual Molson Light Relay Challenge, St. John's

May 15, 16—Dinosaurs: An exhibit, Newfoundland Museum, St. John's
May 16—Coca-Cola 10-km Road Race, St. John's

May 20, 21—A Musical Heritage of Newfoundland with the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra, Arts and Culture Centre, St. John's

May 27—Judy Fagan Dance Show, Arts and Culture Centre, St. John's

May 29—Nfld./Lab. High School Track and Field Championships, St. John's

May 15-June 15—The Vaughan Inuit Print Collection, Art Gallery, Université de Moncton

May 18—Loyalist Day, Saint John

May 18-June 18—Roy Mandell: Still-life paintings in a 17th- and 18th-century style, Sunbury Shores, St. Andrews

May 24—Eastern 75 Stock Car Race, Riverglade Speedway, Petitcodiac

May 24-June 19—Joe Sleep: Exhibit, Galerie Restigouche, Campbellton



NEW BRUNSWICK

May 3-28—Catherine McAvity: Paintings, City Hall Exhibit Gallery, Saint John

May 6-June 30—About Free Lands: An exhibit illustrating the settlement of Eastern Europeans in Western Canada, Moncton Museum

May 10-15—New Brunswick Drama Festival, Fredericton

May 13-15—Quilt Fair: Display, sale, demonstration, YWCA, Saint John

May 15—Model Railroad Show, Kinsmen Centre, Riverview

May 15—3rd Mactaquac Big Bass Tournament, Mactaquac Lake

May 27-30—Cathedral Festival of the Arts: Organ recital, clown performance, country dancing, singing, craft and flower show, art display, Christ Church Cathedral, Fredericton

May 28, 29—Maritime Band Festival, The Coliseum, Moncton

May 31-June 5—Shiretown Festival, Dorchester

June 1-30—Architectural Drawings and Photographs of Historic Saint John, City Hall Exhibit Gallery, Saint John

June 3-5, 10-12—"The Gingerbread Lady," presented by Curtain Call Theatre, Moncton

June 3-6—Grand Bay Days, Grand Bay

June 5—Horse Show, Kingston

June 15-July 15—Profile '81: Nova Scotia Designer Craftsmen juried craft show, Mount Allison University, Sackville

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May 1-23—An exhibition to mark the 25th anniversary of the Canada Council: 1957-1982, Confederation Centre Art Gallery, Charlottetown

May 1-23—The Essential Line: Works by artists including Goya, Delacroix, Matisse, Confederation Centre Art Gallery, Charlottetown

May 5-30—19th-century Canadian paintings, drawings and watercolors from the Permanent Collection, Confederation

Centre Art Gallery

May 9-June 6—Pegi Nicol MacLeod: Retrospective, Eptek Centre, Summerside

May 13-15—African Violet Society of Canada: National show and convention, Charlottetown Hotel

May 27-June 11—Water: An art exhibit on the iconography of water, Confederation Centre Art Gallery

May 27-June 20—Emerging Strategies: Paintings, Confederation Centre Art Gallery

June 5—British Night '82, Confederation Centre

June 6—Maritime Championship Drag Racing, Oyster Bed Bridge

June 12—Colonel Grey-McDonald Road Race (10 km), Charlottetown

NOVA SCOTIA

May—Mermaid Theatre presents "The Cow Show," May 29, King's Theatre, Annapolis Royal; May 30, Acadia University, Wolfville

May 1-30—Earl Baily: An exhibit of 50 oils and watercolors, Bloomfield Centre, Antigonish

May 6-June 20—Views and Profiles by J.F.W. DesBarres: An exhibit of more than 50 Nova Scotia coastal views and profiles done between 1774 and 1803, Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax

May 6-June 20—Historic Portraits from the Permanent Collection: An exhibit of 18th-century portraits by Copley, Robert Field, Charles Comfort and others, Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax

May 10-June 11—Below the Cape: Realist paintings by Annapolis Valley artist George Walford, College of Cape Breton, Sydney

May 14-June 6—Max Beckmann: "Gesichter," a portfolio of dry point prints of the human condition from the First World War period. Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax

May 14-June 27—Ruth Wainwright: Retrospective, 1925-1980, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax

May 20-23—Canadian Gymnastics Championships 1982, Dalhousie University, Halifax

May 21-June 13—Bird paintings by Gary Low, Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax

May 22, 23—Artisan '82, Craft Centre, Paradise

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MOVIES

Let's not hear it for those beaut Australian movies

If only we Canadians had realized there was box office potential in whining about the British, we could be the toast of the cocktail circuit

By Martin Knelman
I always know it's time to leave a party when someone backs me into a corner for a serious discussion about Australian films. The international success of Australian movies has become another stick for Canadians to beat themselves with. The case for the prosecution was succinctly put in *Saturday Night* magazine by Marshall Delaney (alias Robert Fulford): "We and the Australians started out in more or less the same position about 10 or 12 years ago. They have accomplished far more than we have in the same period, and with similar resources. If we decide to follow their example we might begin by establishing, as they did, a serious national film school on a professional level."

Wait a minute. Only a few years ago, the Australians at Cannes were eagerly following Canadians around trying to get a few pointers on how to start an instant film industry. The Canadians tended to regard them as provincials. Then, presto, the Australians are getting the world to notice such movies as *My Brilliant Career*, *Newsfront*, *The Last Wave*, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*, *The Getting of Wisdom*, *Breaker Morant* and now *Gallipoli*. And we're sitting around with egg all over our faces, known around the world as the country that brought you *Running*, *In Praise of Older Women*, *Tribute*, *Agency*, *Silence of the North*, *Middle Age Crazy*, *City on Fire* and other national embarrassments.

I realize I'm in a vulnerable minority on this point, but it seems to me that the spectacular respectability achieved by Australian movies owes as much to marketing techniques as to creative achievement. Amazingly, the Australians have acquired snob appeal. The same people who once demonstrated their superior refinement by appreciating the gloomier films of Ingmar Bergman or the last burst of egomania from Federico Fellini now achieve similar status by being right up to date on Australian films.

What admirers of these films seem unaware of is that the Australians have mainly made their mark by going back to producing the kinds of movies that the rest of the world long ago stopped making. Several of the most revered Australian films are faintly literary period pieces about the country's own recent

past. Carefully crafted, unexciting, frightfully civilized and more than a bit musty, they represent exactly what is meant when people say Hollywood doesn't make the kind of movies it used to.

My Brilliant Career, the story of an outback girl who gives up men for a writing career, is a perfect example. The American critics compared its feisty star, Judy Davis, to Katharine Hepburn in her prime. And the movie, set in the early part of the century, had the kind of sensibility once associated with, say, some of the glossier MGM productions of the 1930s.

In the matter of insufferable trendiness, *My Brilliant Career* has been out-



Bryan Brown and Edward Woodward in *Breaker Morant*



Judy Davis, star of *My Brilliant Career*

done by *Breaker Morant*, which, like so many of the acclaimed Australian movies, stakes out the territory of historical muckraking. We've all read the schoolbooks about the glories of the British Empire, the film seems to say, and we're here to tell you that it wasn't quite that way. OK, but the picture isn't much more than one of those painfully earnest courtroom dramas of the *Twelve Angry Men* variety, now overlaid with a few anti-imperialist rallying cries.

Gallipoli is a handsome production, and it has a few good small moments, but anyone over the age of 15 has probably seen this movie a few times before. It's the one about the innocent lads who go into the army for the glory of God and country, form deep bonds with their fellows, and then get blasted to smithereens for no good reason. In this case, the old formula is overlaid with the new rhetoric about Australia's resentment of British imperialism. To sit through almost any Australian movie is to be subjected to a constant whine: "First the English did this to us, and then they did that to us..." Whining, as we all know, is something Canadians do very well. If only we had realized there was box-office potential in it, we could have beaten the Australians to it.

Just to indulge my fondness for lists, I've chosen a dozen Canadian movies (six in French, six in English), all released since 1970, which I would pit against the best Australia has to offer. The movies on my list, more or less in the order in which they came out, are: *Goin' Down the Road*, *Mon Oncle Antoine*, *La Vraie Nature de Bernadette*, *Kamouraska*, *Between Friends*, *Réjeanne Padovani*, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, *Why Shoot the Teacher*, *Outrageous!*, *J.A. Martin, photographe*, *Les Bons Débarras* and *Ticket to Heaven*.

It's time to do some whining about the unfair comparisons made between Canadian and Australian movies. We started out with similar histories and similar resources. They had, perhaps, the advantage of being far enough from American pop culture not to be swallowed up by it. Given their accents and geography, they couldn't pass for American, and so weren't seduced by the notion of trying to deny their own national identity, as we were. This is one reason why the directors in Australia haven't been defeated by the producers the way ours have been. Rotten movies were made in Australia, but they were kept reasonably quiet; in Canada, on the other hand, we've dwelt more on the bad films, and become so well known for them as to create a national scandal. But mostly, I suspect, what the Australians had going for them was a certain brash confidence which helped them sell their films to the rest of the world. They actually believed that it was possible for something valuable to come out of Australia. And they had the audacity to expect the rest of the world to pay attention.



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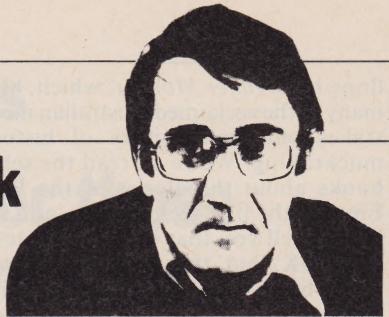
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From pie in the sky and the knee-jerk patriots, dear Lord, deliver us



It's been "Condition Red" here on the fortress isle since young Alfie Peckford got thumbs up from the toiling masses in early April to fight THEM on the beaches, in the fields, in the hills, upstairs, downstairs and in m'lady's chamber. We're loaded for bear, byes. Come near at your peril, Canadian wolf. Don't tread on the toes of the Fighting Newfoundlander.

In other words, we're pitched right back into the same old sickening paranoia, xenophobia, chauvinism and banty-rooster posturing that Joey Smallwood could so easily whip up to a froth when it suited his purpose. It is most discouraging. A healthy measure of "patriotism" is a good and useful thing. But to see it inflamed and bloated and engorged out of recognition by a slick politician puts a chill up the spine.

Unlike some Canadians, Newfoundlanders have always had a strong sense of who and what they were. Geography, language or a common tradition bind people in some areas more strongly than those in others. Cape Breton, Quebec and Vancouver Island are examples. But how easily is the perversion of a good thing accomplished. Mr. Peckford had little (except a still-shattered Liberal party) going for him in the April election. Economic gloom and doom is rampant and an imperious and irked Ottawa did not fling out those make-work scraps which ease the misery temporarily.

Prospects of offshore gas and oil cut less ice here than is often supposed. It is a "One Big Thing." We're a bit like that tribe in the East Indies whose religion involves huge cargo planes appearing in the sky one day laden with pots and pans and calico and gramophones. As a merciful God has granted us at least one millimetre of progress in the past two decades, Newfoundlanders have learned to be chary of the "One Big Thing" ploy.

Mr. Smallwood pretty well beat it to death. He peaked with Churchill hydro, that OBT that was to lift us out of centuries of poverty and squalor and make normal suburban North Americans of us all. To use his own charming phrase we would "have the juice running out of our ears."

Yeah, sure. That and many other things of the sort pretty much disabused us of the notion that One Big Thing is going to be our salvation.

Although on the surface of it Mr. Peckford used the OBT of offshore oil, he is far too cunning a politician to have put all his eggs in such a rickety basket. As a backup, he slammed his fist down hard on the good old "Newfie Patriot"

button and the klaxons and sirens went off with depressing predictability. Once again, it was poor little old downtrodden long-suffering us against ravenous hordes known as THEM. Now, like the "Comme Creeps" so useful to American politicians or the "Capitalist Imperialist Dogs" used to keep the populace on its toes in other quarters, THEM, to Newfoundlanders, is a huge, menacing, evil and dark cloud but so ill-defined that no one has actually taken a clear snapshot of it.

The Mainland, Ottawa, them bloody Frenchmen, that Trudeau, them big oil companies, Hali-bloody-fax, Smurfs, the Russians, them other bloody Frenchmen what owns St. Pierre, that Levesque, God (other than Ours), the Evil Spirits of fornication, wine-bibbing, blasphemy, idolatry and Ray Guy, the P.E.I. Spud Cartel—all these and many other bits and pieces can be stuffed into the great menacing sack labelled THEM.

Poke the patriot button and the dogs of war are loosed. And what a keen and merry pack we are, an exquisitely blended kennel of pugnacious Irish and the sort from Devon and Cornwall that would back Long John Silver to the hilt or cut his throat from ear to ear—depending on his prospects of the moment. Mention Labrador Boundary, for instance, and the radio open lines bristle with one-legged veterans of The Great War eager to hop all the way to Labrador West, if necessary, and beat them bloody Frenchmen to death with their crutches.

Though small, we are feisty. Our experience with Mr. Smallwood's usage of that button has taught that there are certain advance words and phrases by which you can predict the pressing of it. Sure as shooting, when young Alfie Peckford hit his raving, frothing stride during the election campaign, out they came like a perfect hi-fi stereo recording of Joey Smallwood.

"Four and a half centuries of deprivation, degradation poverty and oppression" was good for starters. Followed by "robbed, bilked, cheated and stabbed in the back." Next comes "our last and greatest hope," otherwise known as the One Big Thing. Then the most loaded word of all...."Traitors!" The hairs rose on the back of at least one neck when I heard young Alfie reach his crescendo and scream out "Traitors!" during one rally in the southcoast boondocks.

Who are these traitors? Anyone not prepared to back to the last gasp us poor robbed, bilked, cheated Newfoundlanders against THEM who've recycled once again to stick it to us...once again.

To put a finer point on it, a traitor is anyone who doesn't re-elect a St. Michael Smallwood or a St. Michael Peckford as he goes forth to tackle the Devil Himself on our behalf.

Intellectually, that sort of cheap rubbish brings one around to cookie-tossing time; but, emotionally, there is nothing half so glorious in all the world. Beneath the monstrously inflated blather there are kernels of truth. In the past, Newfoundland's resources have been ripped off and squandered—but as often from within as without. And today it doesn't take a hardened cynic to distinguish between the oil corporations and Sunday-school teachers. Or to see Ottawa siphoning off our vital juices to further bloat Bill Davis, lubricate Quebec or fuel Hali-bloody-fax.

Meanwhile, young Alfie flies as high as old Joey ever did and the means were the same—flaunt a pie-in-the-sky in the faces of knee-jerk patriots. Now that the election is over and the jingoistic flush slightly faded from every cheek, the Holy Grail of gas and oil is mightily tarnished by a crucifying budget and the same old economic misery and shambles that existed before. THEY didn't get us this time but no doubt THEY are still lurking in the underbrush and will be dragged out to do service many more times in the four or five years ahead. Because the threat of THEM is practically all we've got now to keep the mind alive.

There'll be handbooks issued, I expect, for the guidance of the citizen-militia: "Enemy nuclear subs, disposal of—Commandeer dory, row out and bung a cork into her airhole. Ditto enemy whales." "Enemy warships, disposal of—Chuck rocks at any aircraft carrier approaching to within 25 feet of Our Native Shores, but not unless fired upon first."

"Offshore rights, settlement of—Get Skipper Nolly Prescott, justice of the peace, to tell that crowd up there in Ottawa the rights of it." "Upper Churchill Hydro, renegotiation of—Pull plug but not while standing in bathtub."

"Glorious Leader, proper deference to—Though times be harder than ever and the One Big Thing still afar off, always remember that A. Brian Peckford is the only thing standing between you, your loved ones, wee ones and domestic pets and THEM."

Ah's me, we are truly a nation of slow learners. Haste the day and hasten the hour when we say at last: "We have met the enemy and he is us. We had pictured him much taller."



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